Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan

August 2011

Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment

Minister's Message

A good education is the foundation for a good life. As parents, we want what is best for our children and hope that they will be happy, healthy and capable people. As educators, we want to provide learning opportunities that challenge our students and help them to succeed in accomplishing their educational and career goals. As leaders, we must provide the social and economic conditions in our communities that develop a healthy and educated population.

Currently there is a serious gap in education success between Aboriginal and other students but we know we can eliminate it by working together. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan aims to close that gap over the coming years in order that Aboriginal youth can live happy and prosperous lives in two worlds, providing adequately for their families, being healthy, productive community members and reaching their full intellectual and economic potential.

This Plan lays out four priorities, with action items attached to each that will improve the education success of NWT Aboriginal youth. There is a role for everyone: governments, not-for-profit agencies, communities, families, industry and, of course, students themselves. If we all play our part, Aboriginal youth will reap great rewards, and thus the Northwest Territories will be a brighter and better place to live and work for all of us.

The Plan has been created after two years of consultation with almost four hundred stakeholders. A number of initial actions have already taken place. As well, Aboriginal and education leaders came together in July 2011 to sign the NWT Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Partnership Declaration, a copy of which can be found in this document. It is the first time in our Territory's history that this important and influential group acknowledged, in one strong voice, that education is the key to success for our Aboriginal youth.

I believe this Plan has the potential to change lives in the best possible way. I want to thank everyone who contributed their thoughts, ideas and aspirations towards the creation of this Plan. Your work will undoubtedly improve the lives of NWT Aboriginal youth for generations to come.

Masi,

Honourable Jackson Lafferty
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

August 2011

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Introduction

"We are here for a common goal. To work together to make a better life for our children."

Minister Jackson Lafferty

The future of the Northwest Territories (NWT) depends on the strengths of its people. In the NWT as in other parts of Canada, Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing segment of our population and play a key role in our Territory's future. They require the skills and knowledge to shape Northern society in ways that are meaningful, as Northerners, Canadians and international citizens, and to carry on Aboriginal languages and traditions.

Similar to other regions in Canada, the NWT's future and ongoing economic prosperity will be determined by how well the NWT can develop its human resources. It is especially important to support Aboriginal youth, given that 61% of the NWT's population under the age of 25 is Aboriginal.

NWT Aboriginal people must have opportunities and be encouraged and supported to learn and retain their Aboriginal culture and language while also gaining western learning. In the words of respected **Tłı̨chǫ** Elder, Elizabeth Mackenzie, who paraphrased the late **Tłı̨chǫ** Chief Jimmy Bruneau, by stating that, Aboriginal people in the NWT must become "strong like two people". They need to have a strong sense of their identity, as well as be able to successfully navigate the western and global world.

Having a well-educated Aboriginal population is directly linked to developing a vibrant knowledge and skills-based NWT economy. The social and economic outcomes of both Aboriginal and other residents improve when they engage in a variety of educational opportunities. This approach to education ensures that the NWT economy and society are sustainable, socially responsible and able to enhance personal growth opportunities for all NWT people.

The Current Situation for Many NWT Aboriginal Students

Formal public education in the NWT is fairly young. Over the past 30 years the education system in the NWT has grown at a rapid pace and has made significant progress, with more Aboriginal students graduating from high school. A major factor in the increase of NWT Aboriginal graduates was the introduction of high school grade extensions beginning in the early 1990's. This enabled students from small communities to stay within their home community to finish high school and no longer have to leave their community at the end of grade 9. In 2008, Aboriginal graduates made up 50% of the total number of graduating students in the NWT.

Current trends in NWT high school education are promising and provide a positive base on which to build. For example, more Aboriginal students are staying in school longer. From 2004 to 2008, the number of grade 12 students rose from 471 to 680, an increase of 44%. During the same period, the number of Aboriginal grade 12 students rose from 255 to 400, an increase of 57% (see Appendix A: NWT Senior School Graduation by Ethnicity and Community Type, 2003-2009).

Despite these gains, there remains a gap in education achievement between Aboriginal students and other students. This gap begins in the early grades and persists throughout the school years. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) uses Alberta Achievement Tests (AATs) to determine the level at which students in grades 3, 6 and 9 are functioning in mathematics and language arts. Though the AAT results are not separated by student ethnicity, analysis of AAT results in small community, regional centre and Yellowknife schools, infers that NWT Aboriginal students are consistently achieving significantly lower levels than those of other students.

Currently 44% of NWT Aboriginal students graduate from high school. While this is an improvement from ten years ago, when only 20% of Aboriginal students graduated, it is still far behind other students whose graduation rates are 70%.

ECE's partners have identified in regional meetings and in workshops that a major factor affecting Aboriginal student success is school absenteeism. Recent statistics show that on average, Aboriginal students in the NWT miss over 41 days of school a year. This means that by the end of grade 9, the average Aboriginal student will have missed two years of schooling. This is more than twice the amount of school other students miss. This is not to suggest that all NWT Aboriginal students have poor attendance, there are a number of Aboriginal students within the NWT who have excellent attendance records. However there are also a number of Aboriginal students who have missed even more school than these numbers indicate. In any case, these statistics suggest a troubling scenario which must be addressed.

> **"Everyone should actively participate to support Aboriginal Student Achievement."**
>
> Ann Pischinger
> Chair, South Slave District
> Education Council

There are many challenges to eliminating the achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students and it will take a concentrated effort by numerous people and organizations to make significant and lasting progress. Aboriginal student achievement is not the sole responsibility of any one group or person. There is a role for many people to play, including leaders, government, families, community members, volunteers, non-government organizations and students themselves. The whole community must be involved in contributing to the educational success of Aboriginal students. After all, "it takes a community to raise a child".

"It is important for everyone to take responsibility for his or her own learning."

Norman Yakeleya
MLA Sahtu

NWT residents are calling for improvements in education outcomes for Aboriginal students. Aboriginal leaders have stated the importance of having an educated, representative workforce in their communities to be able to apply for jobs and for self-government. Both industry and Aboriginal organizations need a highly skilled workforce to fulfill commitments in Socio-economic Agreements and Impact Benefit Agreements. In addition, the GNWT has a goal of establishing a workforce that is representative of the NWT population.

Many studies indicate large numbers of highly skilled workers are retiring from the workforce. At the same time, large numbers of Aboriginal youth are moving into the labour force. There is a vested interest in ensuring these Aboriginal youth have the skills required to fill vacant positions, not only to attain a more representative workforce throughout the NWT, but to improve the quality of life, health and financial well-being of young people.

$1.9 Billion Benefit to NWT for Eliminating the Education Gap of Aboriginal People

Canadian economic and social researchers Sharpe, Arsenault and Lapointe (2007) and Hull (2009) showed that education is an extremely important determinant of income, labour market outcomes and other indicators of well-being. In particular, higher education is associated with higher income, lower unemployment, higher labour market participation, lower chances of being involved in crime, and better overall health.

The Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) provides research to better understand productivity, living standards and economic and social well-being. CSLS released a 2009 study that used population and economic projections to estimate the effects of eliminating the educational and social gaps of Aboriginal people. The CSLS estimates that $40 billion could be raised from 2006-26 through income tax, property tax, and sales tax. Governments could also save $75 billion through less spending on child and family services; protection of persons and property; social housing; and transfer payments like income support and health care.

That is a benefit of $115 billion, or $88,462 per Aboriginal person in Canada, for eliminating the education gap over the twenty year period of 2006-26. Using these numbers, the benefits to the NWT could be $666 million from increased tax revenue and savings of $1.25 billion in program expenditures. That is a potential total benefit of $1.9 billion over 20 years to the NWT, if Aboriginal people were to increase their education levels to the same level that other NWT residents achieved in 2006 (see Appendix B: Financial Benefits for Eliminating the Education Gap of Aboriginal People).

An investment in the education of NWT Aboriginal people is, in fact, an investment in all NWT people. In the NWT, it is essential that land claims and self government agreements and treaty rights be respected. This will help to create an environment where all Aboriginal parties involved in education, work effectively with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to ensure that Aboriginal students succeed.

"Although the IRC works hard to get jobs in the region, without a good education local people can't participate in this work."

Nellie Cournoyea
CEO/Chair Inuvialuit
Regional Corporation

Setting the Context: Aboriginal Education as a Federal, Provincial and Territorial Priority

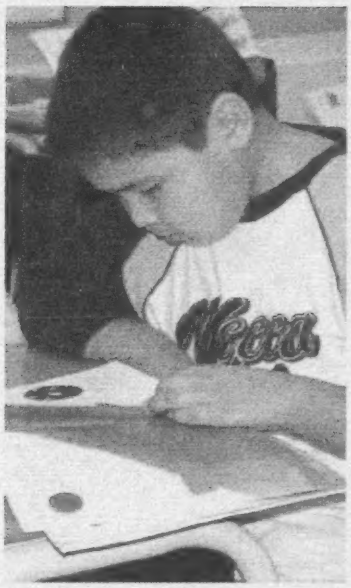
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) (2004-present)

In 2004, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) declared that Aboriginal education is a national priority that requires targeted activities. The Ministers acknowledged they needed to find new and varied ways of working together, in partnership with the federal government and Aboriginal leaders, to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students.

The Ministers identified that improved education outcomes for Aboriginal students would enable them to be active participants in their communities, strengthen their attachment to the labour force, and prepare them for a complex knowledge-based economy. They indicated that along with the rapid increase in the number of Aboriginal children and youth in our school systems, several other factors must be considered:

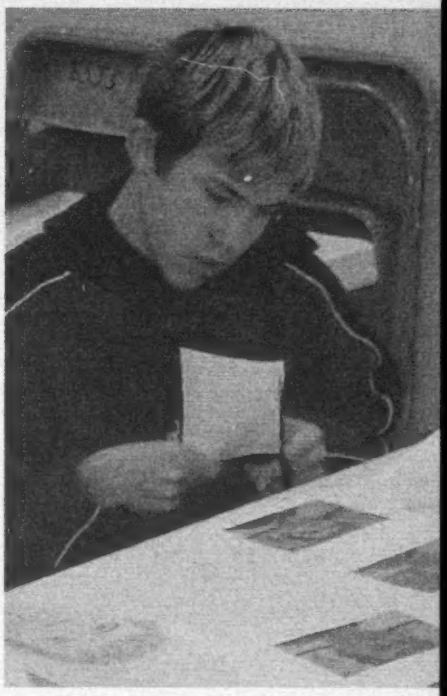
- Both male and female Aboriginal students are performing at lower levels than other students;
- Transient levels are very high for Aboriginal students, as individuals and families move frequently;
- A well-trained Aboriginal teaching force remains small; and
- Existing curricula and teaching delivery methods do not sufficiently reflect Aboriginal needs and values.

CMEC has produced an Aboriginal Education Action Plan and indicates that the Action Plan will lead to the development of a more coordinated strategic approach for provinces and territories to work together with the federal government and Aboriginal leaders and the Aboriginal learning sector.



Northwest Territories 16th Legislative Assembly (2007-2011)

In the 2007 Northerners Working Together plan, the 16th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly identified goals that included a "Strong and Independent North Built on Partnerships" and "Healthy Educated People." The Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) also identified strategic initiatives to achieve these goals and priorities. Under the strategic initiative Building our Future, a key action area is to "Expand Programming for Children and Youth" and "Investing in Education and Training Programs" is a key action area under Maximizing Opportunities.



Northern Leaders' Forum with Leaders From Territorial Aboriginal, Public, and Community Governments (2010-2011)

The Northern Leaders' Forum expressed support for educating Aboriginal children. In Forging the Future: Anchored in our Past, Building on Our Present, the leaders indicated that an array of progressive steps will take the NWT closer to its vision. Northern leaders included the following steps which are similar to and support the Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group recommendations.

- Investing in early childhood learning programs to get young children off to a good start.
- Improving literacy and numeracy rates to increase academic success.
- Families taking more responsibility for the upbringing of their children, making sure they get to school ready to learn and are encouraged to achieve their potential.
- Taking a hard line on policies such as absenteeism; implementing and enforcing children's right to education by making parents aware of their obligations, and supporting and encouraging them to send their children to school.
- Promoting on-line education via technology.
- Developing culturally relevant and quality northern curriculum that utilizes the NWT's natural assets and which reflects NWT history, peoples, cultures and languages.
- Increase Aboriginal language instruction and institute Aboriginal language immersion programs.
- Employing more Aboriginal and Northern teachers.

"Education is a key part of achieving the Yellowknives Dene First Nation vision of a healthy nation."

Chief Eddie Sangris
Yellowknives Dene
First Nation

Formation of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group (2009-2010)

In 2009, ECE began to collaborate with Aboriginal and education leaders to develop a strategy to eliminate the achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group (ASAWG) was established to help develop an NWT-wide education plan to eliminate the educational success gap. The ASAWG was mandated to consider and make recommendations on:

- Early childhood supports to ensure young children are ready for school.
- Kindergarten to grade 12 supports to enable students to stay in, and succeed in, school.
- Adequate student preparation for post-secondary education including college, university, technical, and apprenticeship training.
- Active engagement of parents, communities, and their leaders in supporting Aboriginal student achievement.

The ASAWG had membership from five Aboriginal organizations (the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Dene Nation, the NWT Métis Nation, North Slave Métis Alliance and the Native Women's Association of the NWT), the NWT Literacy Council, and the Northwest Territories Teacher's Association (NWTTA). As well three GNWT departments (Justice, Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment), Aurora College and NWT school boards were members. From time to time, industry representatives also participated in the ASAWG meetings (see Appendix C: ASAWG Member List).

The ASAWG held six meetings between April 2009 and April 2010, examining key issues and promising practices in education. The ASAWG launched pilot projects to improve attendance in each region and a Territory-wide communication strategy to encourage good student and parental practices for educational success. ASAWG members also presented and discussed the four priorities they developed with their constituents and members.

The four priority areas ASAWG recommended are:

a. Early childhood development and child care
b. Student and family support
c. Aboriginal languages and culture curriculum and resource development
d. Literacy

In the 2010/11 school year all partners participated in and shared the costs of initiatives to begin the process of addressing the gap in Aboriginal student achievement through:

a. expanding attendance projects to every school in the NWT,
b. increasing a literacy focus and supports in schools,
c. promoting a community campaign to improve student attendance and to communicate on parental responsibility, and
d. implementing a mandated annual culturally-appropriate orientation for all NWT teachers to increase teachers' cultural understanding.

New initiatives planned for 2011-12 include:

a. Establishing an ECE Literacy Specialist Coordinator and the cost sharing of literacy coaches with education authorities, and
b. Establishing a Library Literacy Coordinator and funding five new school community libraries.

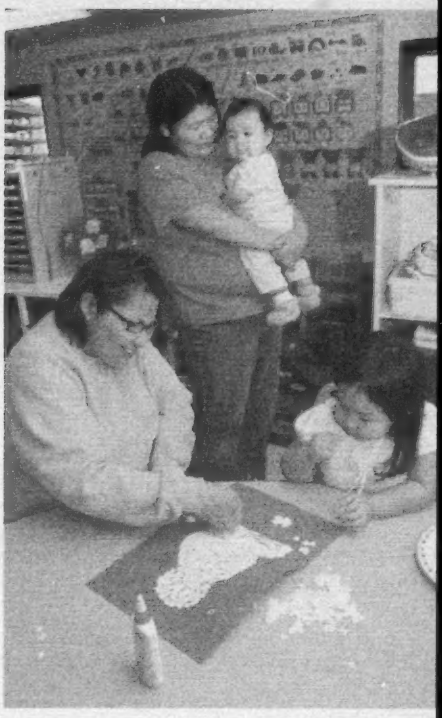
ECE Minister's Regional Forums on ASA (2010- 2011)

In follow up to the work of the ASAWG, the Minister of ECE held a series of regional forums to discuss the identified priority areas with education, Aboriginal, community and youth leaders. Participants who met with the ECE Minister in the regional forums included two youth, two Aboriginal leaders and two education leaders from each community in the region, MLAs and Mayors for the region, Aurora College staff, the NWTTA President and regional NWTTA representatives, and GNWT staff.

The intention of the regional forums was to engage with, get active participation from, and create stronger educational partnerships between ECE, Divisional Education Councils/District Education Authorities (DEC/DEA), and Aboriginal governments and organizations. During the regional forums the participants and leadership of each region spent the first two days of the meeting discussing the four priorities the ASAWG recommended.

On the third day, participants met in community groups and planned how to better engage the people within their community and region to take increased responsibility for their children's education, in partnership with ECE and the regional and local school boards. While the plans varied from community to community, and region to region, they often included taking immediate action and identified who would be responsible for various actions.

In total, approximately 380 people participated in the regional forums (see Appendix D: ASA Regional Forums Participants Lists). Based on the consultations and feedback received during the forums, it was agreed that it was essential to develop an overarching Territory-wide plan to address the achievement gap in education between Aboriginal and other students.



"Ultimately it is the communities who will make the biggest difference and drive these initiatives."

Minister Jackson Lafferty

ASA Status Report Tabled (May 2011)

During the May 2011 Legislative Assembly sitting, Minister Lafferty shared with all MLAs the information gathered at the ASA Regional Forums. The Minister also indicated that ECE would be sharing the outcomes from the ASA Regional Forums with Aboriginal Leaders and educational authorities to further engage with them and to ask them to provide feedback and suggestions (see Appendix E: ASA Status Report, May 2011).

ECE Minister's Meeting with Aboriginal and Educational Leaders (May 2011)

In May 2011, Minister Lafferty met with leaders of the Aboriginal governments, educational authorities and Aurora College to discuss the outcomes of the ASA Regional Forums. All leaders agreed that the four priority areas identified by the ASAWG were indeed the priority areas that needed to be focused on to improve the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

At that time, the Minister also proposed that Aboriginal governments and education leaders sign an Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Partnership Declaration to demonstrate the shared commitment to work together in a collaborative and cooperative manner to improve education achievement for Aboriginal students. Leaders agreed that the Declaration was a strong demonstration of commitment to work together and that they would take the Declaration back to their respective organizations for discussion. Subsequently, the ASA Education Partnership Declaration was signed.

Minister Jackson Lafferty and Dene Leaders after signing the Education Partnership Declaration at the 2011 Dene National Assembly in Fort Providence.

Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Partnership Declaration

Recognizing that through education the people of the Northwest Territories can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be responsible, confident members of society who can provide leadership and direction for the future;

Believing that the focus of the education system must be students and on developing the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual aspects of their lives within a safe and positive learning environment;

Believing that education must be a partnership between students, parents, elders, communities, educators and governments who each have a vital role to play and a responsibility to one another in achieving quality and excellence in education; and

Recognizing that there exists a gap in education achievement between Aboriginal and other students.

We, the signatories to this Declaration commit to the following aimed at improving the education outcomes for Aboriginal students in the Northwest Territories:

Article 1- We recognize that public education aims to achieve quality education for all students and we all have roles and responsibilities for making improvements that will eliminate the gap in education achievement between Aboriginal and other students.

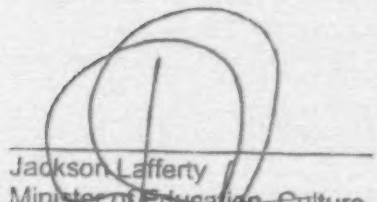
Article 2 – We commit to working together and supporting each others' work to provide a quality education system in the Northwest Territories at the territorial, regional and community levels that will eliminate the gap in education outcomes between Aboriginal and other students.

Article 3 – We agree that the priorities for attention and action that will help eliminate the education achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students are:

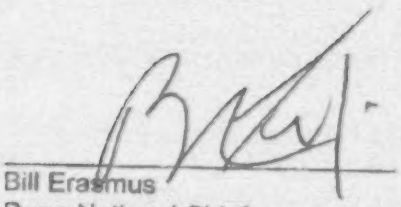
- Early childhood development and childcare
- Student and family support
- Aboriginal language and culture curriculum and resource development
- Literacy

"Students are our future leaders and as our future leaders we have the responsibility to provide them not only with the best quality education system we can, but one that inspires each of them to work towards academic excellence"

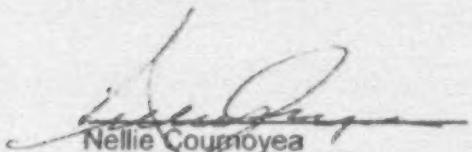
Ted Blondin
Chair, Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency



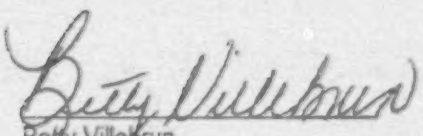
Jackson Lafferty
Minister of Education, Culture
and Employment
Government of the NWT



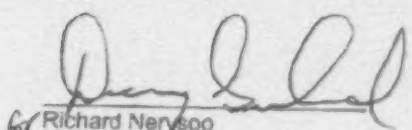
Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief
Dene Nation



Nellie Cournoyea
CEO and Chair
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

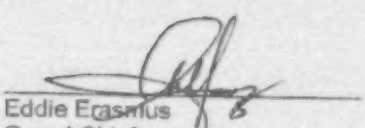


Betty Villebrun
President
NWT Metis Nation



for Richard Nerysoo
President
Gwich'in Tribal Council

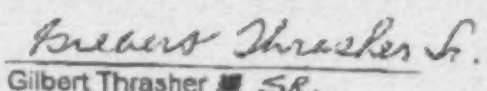
Frank Andrew
Grand Chief
Sahtu Dene Council



Eddie Erasmus
Grand Chief
Tlicho Government

Sam Gargan
Grand Chief
Dehcho First Naton

Chief Eddie Sangris
Representative
Akaitcho Territory Government



Gilbert Thrasher SR.
Chairperson
Beaufort Delta Divisional
Education Council

Terry Kunkel
Chairperson
Sahtu Divisional Education Council

Ted Blondin
Chairperson
Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency

Martina Norwegian
Chairperson
Decho Divisional Education Council

Ann Pischinger
Chairperson
South Slave Divisional Education Council

Mary Vané
Chairperson
Yellowknife Catholic Schools

Allan Shortt
Chairperson
Yellowknife District Education No. 1

(Vice-président)
Suzette Montreuil
Chairperson
Commission scolaire francophone
Territories du Nord-Ouest

John McKee
Chairperson
Aurora College

NWT Aboriginal Student Achievement Next Steps: Moving Forward (2011-2021)

The Purpose

The purpose of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan is to identify strategic actions to eliminate the achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students.

The Plan outlines a number of actions that can be taken to improve education achievement for Aboriginal students. Action on specific activities will be influenced by the availability of fiscal resources and coordination and collaboration with partners.

The Vision

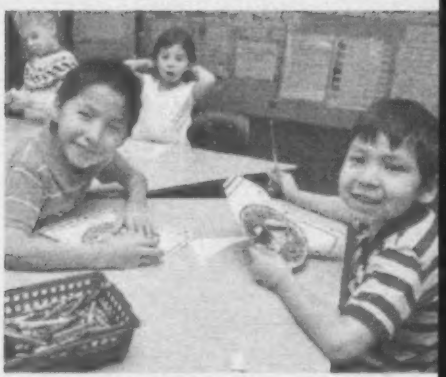
The vision of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan describes how Aboriginal students will perform in the education system if the Plan is successful:

Aboriginal students, with a strong foundation for learning, achieving their educational potential and contributing to a strong and prosperous society.

The Outcomes

The outcomes describe what will be achieved through the implementation of this Plan. The key outcomes include:

1. Aboriginal students graduate from senior secondary schooling and meet the entrance requirements for post secondary education at the same rate as other students in the NWT.
2. Government departments, education authorities, Aboriginal leadership and other agencies at community, regional and territorial levels work collaboratively using an interagency approach to support the education of Aboriginal students from early childhood through to post secondary.
3. Families of Aboriginal students are actively engaged in the education of their children and are provided with a variety of supports to maximize the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual development of their children.
4. Aboriginal languages and culture-based education is recognized as an integral and essential part of the education experience for all NWT Aboriginal students.



The Guiding Principles

The principles that guide the work of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan are based on the ECE Strategic Plan 2005-2015 "Building on Our Success". The principles of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan have been further defined through consultation with stakeholders at the Minister's Regional Aboriginal Student Achievement forums.

These principles are:

1. The Aboriginal languages and cultures of the NWT are valued and serve as the foundation for developing and delivering our education system.
2. Investment in NWT Aboriginal people's education is an investment in all NWT people.
3. Programs and services are responsive to the changing social, economic, political and constitutional environment of the NWT.
4. ECE strives to work collaboratively and respectfully with all Aboriginal governments, education authorities, community governments, business and industry, government departments and agencies to improve the educational, social and economic outcomes of Aboriginal people.
5. ECE is committed to respect and focus on the four priorities determined through the Aboriginal Student Achievement consultation process. These priorities are:
    a. Early Childhood Development and Child Care
    b. Student and Family Support
    c. Aboriginal Language and Culture Curriculum and Resource Development
    d. Literacy

The Goals

The goals under each of the four Aboriginal Student Achievement priorities are as follows:

a. **Early Childhood Development and Child Care**:
Develop early childhood programs, services and initiatives that optimize the healthy development of Aboriginal children.

b. **Student and Family Support**:
Provide a variety of support services for Aboriginal students and families to ensure academic success.

c. **Aboriginal Language and Culture Curriculum and Resource Development**:
Support Aboriginal students in reaching their full potential by becoming proficient in their Aboriginal language and strong in their culture.

d. **Literacy**:
Eliminate the literacy gap between Aboriginal and other students.

Overview of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan

Vision	Aboriginal students, with a strong foundation for learning, achieving their educational potential and contributing to a strong and prosperous society.			
Outcomes	1. Aboriginal students graduate from senior secondary schooling and meet the entrance requirements for post secondary education at the same rate as other students in the NWT. 2. Government departments, education authorities, Aboriginal leadership and other agencies at community, regional and territorial levels work collaboratively using an interagency approach to support the education of Aboriginal students from early childhood through to post secondary. 3. Families of Aboriginal students are actively engaged in the education of their children and are provided with a variety of supports to maximize the physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual development of their children. 4. Aboriginal languages and culture-based education is recognized as an integral and essential part of the education experience for all NWT Aboriginal students.			
Priorities	Early Childhood Development and Child Care	Student and Family Support	Aboriginal Language and Culture Curriculum and Resource Development	Literacy
Goals	Develop early childhood programs, services and initiatives that optimize the healthy development of Aboriginal children.	Provide a variety of support services for Aboriginal students and families to ensure academic success.	Support Aboriginal students in reaching their full potential by becoming proficient in their Aboriginal language and strong in their culture.	Eliminate the literacy gap between Aboriginal and other students.

With the vision, outcomes, guiding principles and goals in mind, this Plan calls for the following actions to eliminate the education achievement gap between Aboriginal students and other students in the NWT.

Priority 1: Early Childhood Development and Child Care

Experiences in childhood impact the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual well being of children throughout their lives. An education plan to increase Aboriginal student achievement must be built on a foundation of quality early childhood experiences.

ECE is currently undertaking a review and renewal of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework for Action. The ECD Framework is a directional document that guides program development and financial investments in the multiple areas of early childhood development. Youth, parents, Aboriginal leaders and community members confirmed four early childhood priorities during the regional ASA forums. These community priorities complement information gathered during the ECD Framework review. Upcoming community consultations on the renewal of the ECD Framework for Action will explore the four ASA early childhood priorities:

1. Early childhood development programs and supports and child care that reflect the local community and culture;
2. Strengthening kindergarten programming and curriculum;
3. Supporting families and caregivers; and
4. Partnering with the Department of Health and Social Services to improve the quality of programs and services for children.

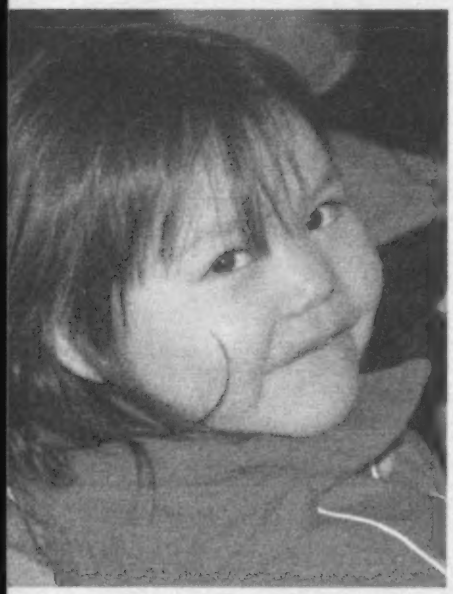
Community coalitions working towards common early childhood development priorities offer incredible potential to raise student achievement in the NWT. Early childhood development and child care are in many ways the foundation of the other three ASA priorities. Early childhood experiences impact Aboriginal language acquisition, early literacy development, and encompass comprehensive child and family supports. Partnerships between caregivers, families, communities, and across governmental lines must focus on the shared goal of bettering the lives of children.

Goal

Develop and support early childhood programs, services and initiatives that optimize the healthy development of Aboriginal children.

"To promote, protect, revive and ensure the future of Aboriginal languages at least two things are needed: the ability of generations to pass on the language and good early childhood programs in the language."

Suzette Montreuil
Chair, commission scolaire francophone



Element #1:
Quality early childhood development and child care reflecting local community and culture.

Actions

a. Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework Review and Renewal

1. Complete the review of the ECD Framework for Action.
2. Consult with community stakeholders on the recommendations from the ECD Framework review and on the development of the revised ECD Framework.
3. Develop and implement the revised ECD Framework.
4. Support the development of community based early childhood coalitions including Aboriginal leaders and governments, local organizations, businesses and families.

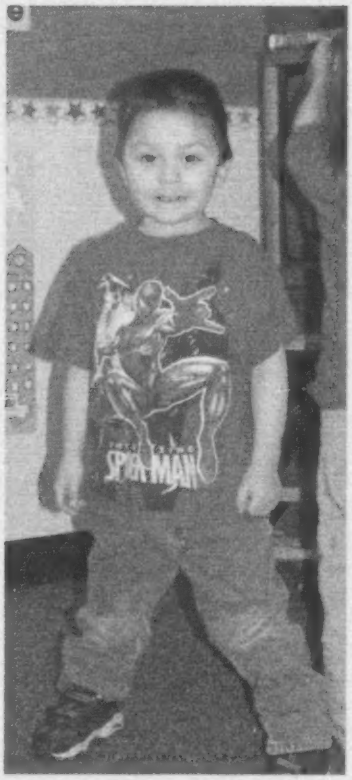
b. NWT Early Childhood Education Training Review

1. Complete the review of the NWT early childhood education training options.
2. Revise training options for NWT early childhood educators to better reflect local community, culture and languages.
3. Support early childhood development providers in the organization and delivery of quality and effective Aboriginal language programming and activities.

Element #2: Kindergarten.

Actions

1. Revise the current NWT kindergarten curriculum ensuring it is play and literacy based, culturally appropriate and can be used for both full and half day kindergarten programming options.
2. Develop resources and provide teacher training for the revised kindergarten curriculum.
3. Implement revised NWT kindergarten curriculum.
4. Implement the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in all NWT kindergarten classrooms to measure the early development of children across the NWT.
5. Use the EDI data to guide community and regional based early childhood program development and territorial policy decision making.
6. Conduct further research and consultation on the concepts of NWT-wide formal programming for four year olds.



Element # 3:
Helping Parents and Families.

Actions

1. Support communities to develop and deliver comprehensive, intensive and ongoing family centred programs and services.
2. Engage families as key players in a comprehensive approach to address early childhood development, child care and poverty issues in the NWT.
3. Provide Aboriginal parents with the knowledge and skills to support their children's development by offering a variety of ongoing supports, parenting workshops and training opportunities.
4. Develop a communication plan to build parents understanding of early childhood development inclusive of the cultures in the NWT.

Element # 4:
Partner with the Department of Health and Social Services

Actions

1. Develop and implement GNWT-wide policies for integrated service agreements to ensure interdepartmental collaboration.
2. Use an interagency approach to develop and deliver early childhood programs and services.
3. Develop a clear protocol that facilitates interagency information sharing.
4. Employ an interagency approach when transitioning students from early childhood programs into kindergarten.

Priority 2:
Student and Family Support

Supporting students and families in a learning environment that recognizes diversity is complex and involves many elements. Professional collaboration, strong family and community partnerships are essential. Further, a continuum of supports that meet students and their families needs are also fundamental in such a system.

A healthy education system, where all Aboriginal children reach their potential, must take a strengths based approach. That is, educators and those supporting the student must consider the student's passions, interests, ability, and cultural background when planning and arranging for support.

A quality education system for Aboriginal students, regardless of ability level, background or other challenges, is best realized through the cooperative, integrated efforts of home, school and community. It is the responsibility of ECE to lead the charge in uniting these individuals and agencies in providing the best services for Aboriginal students. This attention to appropriate supports, an emphasis on collaboration, and effective accountability will help Aboriginal learners attain a higher level of academic success.

Clearly, for all children to reach their potential education must be viewed as a collective responsibility.

> "We need to get parents engaged in education. They are the key to the success of our children and to keeping kids in school."
>
> Richard Nerysoo
> President, Gwich'in Tribal Council

Goal

Provide support services for Aboriginal students and families to ensure success.

Element # 5:
Positive student-home-school relationships.

Develop an interagency service delivery model with Aboriginal organizations, community leaders, GNWT departments and other groups to provide support for all Aboriginal students and their families.

Actions

a. Interagency Collaboration

1. Identify and address barriers that inhibit interagency collaboration.
2. Apply NWT interagency models to address the Aboriginal student achievement gap.
3. Employ an interagency approach to information sharing when transitioning students from early childhood programs into kindergarten.
4. Explore options for providing multidisciplinary training for staff from various agencies.

5 Work with partners to support and explore options in delivering programs that support families, e.g. homework, tutoring.

6 Identify, maintain and distribute a list of community and regional service providers for each NWT community and each NWT region.

7 Employ the Healthy Choices Framework to harmonize GNWT departments' efforts to support schools as health promoting environments.

b. Increase K-12 Student Attendance

1 Provide support for schools to work with partners and families on raising awareness of the importance of student attendance, and to increase K-12 student attendance.

2 Consult with schools and boards to develop and share a 'best practices' resource on increasing school attendance.

3 Conduct further investigation and research on the effect that bullying has on student attendance in NWT schools.

Elements #6: Helping NWT students complete their education

and

Element #7: Providing tools to help students progress through schooling.

Ensure that a wide variety of support, career and counseling services are available to all Aboriginal students within the NWT.

Actions

a. Counselling Services

1 Conduct an inventory of the various types of counselling (personal, career planning, addictions, guidance) services offered in the NWT that are available for families and K-12 schools.

2 Provide training for counsellors in all NWT regions as determined by the information found in the inventory of NWT counselling services.

3 Develop a plan to advance counsellors' knowledge and skill sets through ongoing training and professional development.

4 Expand and implement ongoing career awareness and post secondary planning programs in all NWT schools.

b. Teacher Professional Development and Training

1. Identify key areas of professional development required by staff in supporting Aboriginal students.
2. Implement pre-service training within NWT teacher orientation, with an emphasis on cultural understanding and supporting students, for all teachers new to the NWT.
3. Ensure through annual training and information sharing that all NWT education staff (teachers, school administrators and board staff) understand the intergenerational impacts and effects of the NWT residential school experience.

c. Partnerships

1. Explore and/or promote partnership opportunities with community agencies in providing programs and services to Aboriginal students and their families.
2. Conduct research on the feasibility of using existing telehealth equipment to provide a variety of services to communities.

d. Programming

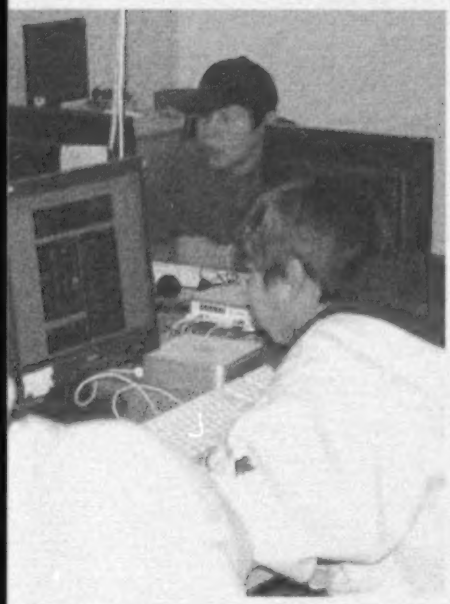
1. Review and implement programs that promote positive mental health within a comprehensive school health framework.
2. Explore and support the implementation of programs that meet the needs of youth who are marginalized.
3. Explore and implement culturally appropriate K-12 school programs that address and target bullying.

e. Accountability

1. Ensure that Inclusive Schooling and Aboriginal Language & Culture Based Education (ALCBE) expenditures are in line with GNWT directives.
2. Develop a centralized system for the collection and storage of data on K-12 student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Student Support Plans (SSPs).
3. Research accountability frameworks, with support from the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) partners, operating in jurisdictions that employ inclusive schooling principles.
4. Review the Accountability Framework to allow for Board flexibility in piloting programming aimed at improving outcomes for Aboriginal students.

"Parents need to encourage their children to be the best that they can be."

Grand Chief Frank Andrew
Sahtu Dene Council



Priority 3: Aboriginal Language and Culture Curriculum and Resource Development

Aboriginal language and culture deserves particular attention and focuses on raising the achievement levels for Aboriginal students who are not academically succeeding in a western based school system. Acknowledging and underscoring the value of Aboriginal culture and languages is crucial, but more important is helping to give Aboriginal students the opportunity to live their culture and speak their first language in their everyday lives.

To become proficient in their Aboriginal language, students need constant exposure to fluent speakers at home, in their community and at school. They also should be aware that they are the focus of a concerted community and territorial plan to harmonize culture and language in both traditional and day to day activities.

In order to create meaningful learning for Aboriginal students, the NWT education system must help them to understand and be proud of who they are and from where they come. Proficiency in their Aboriginal language and strength in their culture complements self-worth.

To effectively support the language and cultural learning of Aboriginal students it is imperative we employ well trained teachers using effective instructional strategies and tools in a delivery model that reflects their needs and priorities. As well, there is a need for secure and appropriate funding that will permit collaboration among all interested parties, training and monitoring plans, and development of new initiatives.

> "If we always focus on the problems we never see all the gifts that we have, particularly of language and identity. We need to talk about our assets and strengths and bring these into the schools."
>
> Jim Martin
> CEO, Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency

Goal

Support Aboriginal Students to become proficient in their Aboriginal language and strong in their culture.

Element #8: Develop Aboriginal language and culture curriculum and resources.

The development of K-12 Dene and Inuit languages curriculum and teacher/student resources that are aligned with the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curriculum frameworks is of utmost importance. The creation of the K-12 Dene Language and K-12 Inuvialuit curriculum cannot be developed by ECE in isolation and must involve all the NWT language communities.

Actions

a. Support all DEC/DEAs and community leaders in understanding their role in and committing to the NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan: A Shared Responsibility (ALP).

1. In partnership the school, the DEA/DEC, and community leaders, develop a common understanding of the goals of the ALP, then set priorities and steps for the regional board, each community and each school.

2 Collaborate with community members to create a school plan that supports the "community language plan".

3 Consider hiring a "cultural liaison person" (not a teacher) per language community to cooperate with the region and the community to activate the ALP.

4 Review the structures, functions and funding of the Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs) to increase linkages between community language plans, TLCs and schools.

5 Remove barriers that inhibit collaboration among NWT Aboriginal language resource developers whether they are at TLCs, community based language committees, early childhood programs or schools.

6 In consultation with DEC/DEAs and communities, develop a communication tool that helps parents with strategies to support language acquisition.

7 Assess new technologies that could support the work of organizations responsible for revitalizing and enhancing Aboriginal language use.

b. K-12 Aboriginal Language and Culture Based Education

1 Review and revise the ECE Aboriginal Language and Culture Based Education Directive (ALCBE).

2 Explore and support boards that wish to offer Aboriginal language immersion and/or intensive language programming.

3 Install Dene fonts on all NWT school and board computers and train staff in their use.

4 In consultation with DEC/DEAs, Aboriginal leaders and the public at large, add an NWT Senior Secondary Diploma requirement that requires all NWT students to have successfully completed a minimum of 5 credits in one of the NWT official Aboriginal languages in order to obtain their NWT Senior Secondary diploma.

5 Focus K-9 Aboriginal language instruction expectations on teaching students daily conversational uses of the language.

Element #9:
NWT Aboriginal Language Instructors, Resources and Mentors.

Actions

c. Increase the number of Aboriginal teachers, speakers, language instructors, and Elders in our school system:

1 Identify and fund fluent Aboriginal speaking Elders in all schools as language and cultural role models.

2 In consultation with DEC/DEAs, work towards all NWT schools having at least one Aboriginal language monitor similar to NWT French monitors.

3 In consultation with DEC/DEAs, work towards having an Aboriginal language coach per regional board to assist and mentor Aboriginal language teachers.

4 Promote teaching as an exciting, positive and rewarding career choice by developing a revised NWT recruitment and retention plan for Aboriginal teachers.

5 Increase opportunities for NWT Teacher Education Program students to learn Aboriginal languages.

6 Explore in partnership with Aurora College a cooperative program for NWT language instructors in which students could be language assistants throughout their formal training.

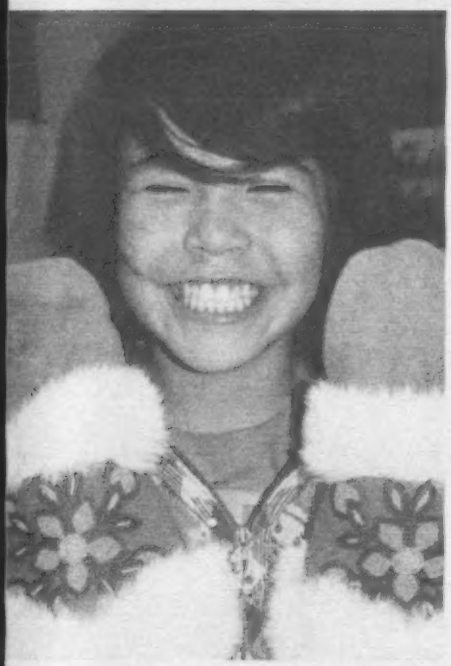
7 Establish NWT summer Aboriginal language camps for students, teachers, and community members.

8 Provide ongoing professional development opportunities and training for Aboriginal language learning for all NWT teachers.

9 Develop packaged learning programs and materials to support home study and learning of Aboriginal languages.

10 Develop Aboriginal language programs for use in the delivery of community-based evening programming.

11 In cooperation with language communities, prepare "tool kits" to assist Aboriginal language instructors/teachers and mentors in planning, organizing and delivering language activities.



Priority 4: Literacy

Literacy is of paramount importance because many NWT Aboriginal students lack the basic education and skills to transition into skill-based training or post secondary education in order to fill the jobs being created. Of particular concern is the fact that 70% of NWT Aboriginal adults lack the literacy skills to fully participate in society, compared to 30% of other adults. Effective literacy initiatives are crucial for the evolution of an equitable NWT society where all residents are able to access new opportunities and benefit from the prosperity found in our territory.

In the NWT Literacy Strategy, Towards Literacy: A Strategic Framework 2008-2018, literacy is identified as a continuum of skill development, ranging from learning to read to performing a complex set of skills. In today's society the broad definition of literacy includes reading text, document use, writing, oral communications, numeracy, thinking skills, computer use, working with others and continuous learning. These foundational skills are used at home, at school, in the community and in the workplace. Increased literacy skills will enable Aboriginal students in the NWT to be healthy, self-reliant individuals with an improved quality of life.

The actions proposed below are grounded in the need to provide consistent and current support to educators, including teachers, librarians, parents, and community members, to ensure that all students have access to quality and equitable education. Building school and community capacity should result in higher quality instructional practice and raise student achievement. Improving literacy levels is essential for the future personal and social well-being of individuals and the NWT's prosperity.

Goal

Eliminate the literacy gap of NWT Aboriginal students.

Element #10:
Increase and Improve Literacy Skills.

In support of literacy competencies that are becoming necessary in our current and future society, it is essential that all NWT Aboriginal and other students become proficient readers, writers, speakers, critical thinkers and creative problem solvers. In order to do that they must have early and constant opportunities to read, write, speak and critically problem solve.

Actions

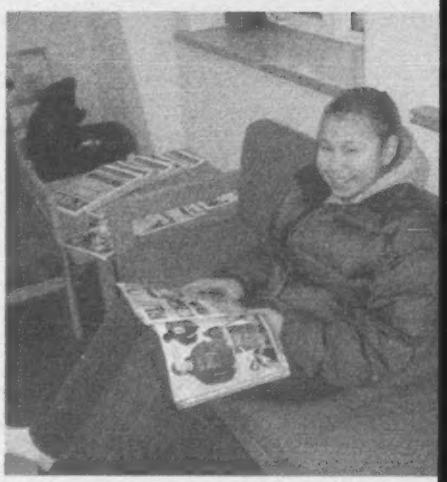
a. Expand NWT K-12 teachers' professional capacity in literacy instruction and assessment.

1. Establish school-based literacy coaches to work on an ongoing basis with teachers in classrooms to build teacher capacity and skills in literacy instruction and assessment.
2. Provide literacy leadership and training to DEC/DEAs board-level literacy coordinators and school-based literacy coaches.
3. Offer online courses in reading and writing instruction for all K-12 NWT teachers.
4. Train NWT teachers on how to establish learning approaches and environments that are culture-based; project, inquiry, and competency-based; student-choice driven and emphasize assessment for learning.
5. Support and guide teachers in adapting existing courses to better meet specific student needs.
6. Develop Literacy with Information and Communication Technology (LwICT) Directive including technology mentors in all NWT schools and board Information Technology support positions for all DEC/DEAs.
7. Support and guide all K-3 teachers in ensuring that students, both Aboriginal and other, are reading and writing at or above grade level by the end of grade 3.

Actions

b. School-Community Libraries, Support and Resources

1. Ensure there is a school-community library in every NWT community.
2. Expand and maintain library book collections and equipment in all NWT school-community libraries.
3. Provide equitable access to print and digital resources for student, family and community members across the NWT.
4. Fund school-community librarians as part of the funding formula.
5. Provide ongoing support and training to school-community library staff to ensure they are equipped to provide family literacy and library instructional programming on research, information retrieval, evaluation of sources, and crediting sources.
6. Provide access and training to book cataloguing software, online databases, repositories, and memberships to digital resources.
7. Prioritize the provision of equitable bandwidth access to all NWT schools.
8. Provide digital access throughout schools with installation and maintenance of server accounts and wireless environments.
9. Establish a strategy for family literacy delivery in all the NWT's official languages.



Actions

c. Improving K-12 Curriculum and Assessment Tools

1. Identify and include culture-based principles across all K-12 curriculum.
2. Revise and develop NWT K-12 curriculum organized around essential literacy competencies and life skills reflective of northern worldviews and citizenship.
3. Emphasize cross-disciplinary integration of various subject areas in future K-12 curriculum revisions.
4. Revise K-6 curriculum to emphasize and focus on literacy competencies for all students.
5. Provide all K-12 teachers with assessment tools to ensure that teachers, students and families assess the accurate literacy level of students at every grade as they progress through their schooling.

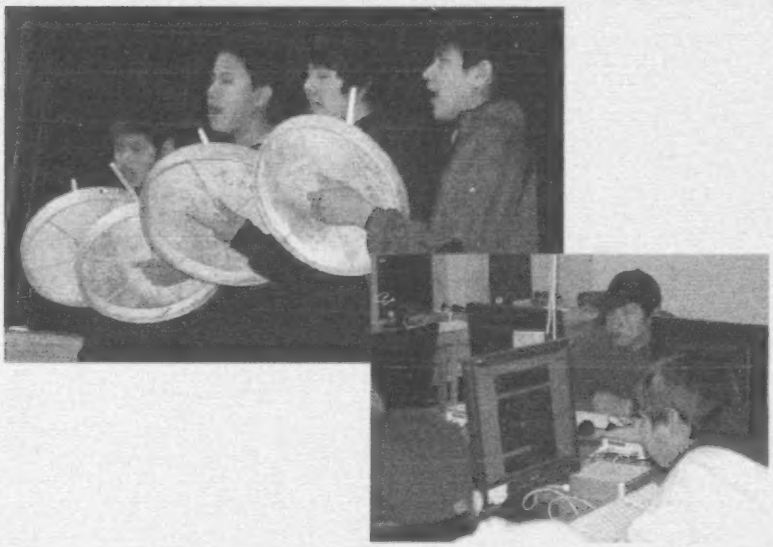
Conclusion

Over the next 10 years it is essential that ECE work corroboratively in partnership with Aboriginal governments and other organizations such as the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, the NWT Literacy Council, the Departments of Health and Social Services, Justice and Municipal and Community Affairs, and various NWT businesses and industry, to improve the academic achievement of NWT Aboriginal students.

The Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan will guide all partners in their activities. This Plan provides an effective overview of what the people of the NWT have said are the priority areas that need to be addressed and focused on, in order to best help Aboriginal students become "stong like two people". This Plan outlines important actions that will close the Aboriginal student achievement gap and as a result help improve the quality of life for all NWT residents.

"I am hopeful our children will aspire to be strong like two people."

Chief Roy Fabian
K'atl'odehche First Nation



Appendices

Appendix A

Secondary School Graduates by Ethnicity and Community Type

Graduation Rate	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Graduation Rate (%)	43.7%	45.3%	49.1%	50.7%	51.9%	55.7%	53.2%
Aboriginal Grad Rate ((%)	32.2%	34.4%	37.2%	39.4%	38.2%	44.3%	43.8%
Non-Aboriginal Grad Rate (%)	58.5%	57.9%	71.3%	71.4%	75.6%	74.7%	69.2%

Graduation rates may change as periodically the Bureau of Statistics adjusts the population numbers.
The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates by the population of 18 year olds.

Number of Graduates

Community Type	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Communities	59	72	115	121	102	116	109
Regional Centres	71	65	56	64	84	99	110
Yellowknife	153	165	183	182	186	208	214
NWT Total	**283**	**302**	**354**	**367**	**372**	**423**	**433**

Note: - Graduation numbers for 2003 to 2009 are revised to reflect students, reported to the Department by schools, who met graduation requirements as of December 31.
- Graduation numbers by community type revised to reflect home boarding students graduating from school in home community.

Number of Graduates

Ethnicity	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Aboriginal	118	122	175	185	174	210	223
Non-Aboriginal	165	180	179	182	198	213	211
NWT Total	**283**	**302**	**354**	**367**	**372**	**423**	**433**

Number of Graduates

Ethnicity	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Grand Total	**283**	**302**	**354**	**367**	**372**	**423**	**433**
Dene	65	69	114	120	93	118	133
NT Metis	21	18	24	29	33	45	32
Inuit	32	35	37	36	48	47	57
Non-Aboriginal	165	180	179	182	198	213	211

Note: Southern Aboriginal students are included in Dene

Population

NWT	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Population of 18 Year Olds	648	666	721	724	717	759	814
Aboriginal	366	355	470	469	455	474	509
Non Aboriginal	282	311	251	255	262	285	305

Population numbers are provided by the NWT Bureau of Statistics

Education Operations & Development
Education, Culture and Employment
August 9, 2010

Financial Benefits Of Eliminating Education Gap of Aboriginal People

Sharpe, Arsenault and Lapointe (2007) and Hull (2009) showed that education is an important determinant of income, labour market outcomes and other indicators of well-being. In particular, higher education is associated with higher income, lower unemployment, higher labour market participation, lower chances of being involved in crime, and better overall health.

In May 2009 the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) released a study that looked at the cost to Canadian governments related to the Aboriginal population's subpar levels of social well-being. CSLS used population and economic projections to look at the potential effect on government spending and government revenues if we were able to eliminate the educational and social gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Specifically, the Centre looked at how much money could be raised in a twenty year period through taxes, which included Income Tax, Property Tax, and Sales Tax. They also looked at how much money governments could save through less spending on Social Programs in the areas of: Child and Family Services; Protection of Persons and Property; Social Housing; and Transfer Payments like Income Support and Health Care.

The cost of the Aboriginal population's above average use of government services was approximately $6.2 billion in 2006. Assuming the cost grows at the same rate as the Aboriginal population, it is expected to increase to $8.4 billion in 2026. If Aboriginal people's education levels and labour market outcomes were to reach non-Aboriginal 2006 levels, governments would benefit by $3.5 billion in additional tax revenue in 2026. Considering both monetary savings and increased tax revenues, government would gain by $11.9 billion in 2026 alone. The cost and extra revenue projections are in 2006 dollars.

Below is the Best Case Scenario: Benefits to Canada and the NWT, if we were able to increase aboriginal education levels to the level that non-Aboriginal people were at in 2006.

BENEFIT To CANADA	**BENEFIT To NWT**
• In 2006 there were 1.3 million Aboriginal people or 4% of 32.65 million Canadian pop.	• In 2006 there were 21,639 Aboriginal people or 50.1% of 43,198 NWT population
Benefits to Canada in 2026 alone **All Aboriginal People** Increased tax revenue $3,500 million Decreased social program expenditures $8,400 million **Total Benefits $11,900 million** **Per Aboriginal Person** $3,500million/1.3 million = $2,692 per person $8,400 million/1.3 million = $6,461 per person **Total Benefits $9,153 per person**	**Benefits to the NWT In 2026 alone** **All Aboriginal People** 21,639 x $2,692/person = $58.3 million 21,639 x 21,639 x $6,461/person = $139.8 million **All Aboriginal People** Increased tax revenue $58.3 million Decreased social program expenditures $139.8 million **Total Benefits $198.1 Million**

Benefit to Canada	Benefit to NWT
Cumulative Benefits from 2006 to 2026 **All Aboriginal People** Increased tax revenue $40,000 million Cumulative Savings in program expenditures = $75,000 million Total effect ***$115,000 million*** **Per Aboriginal Person** $40,000 million/1.3 million = $30,770 per person $75,000 million/1.3 million = $57,692 per person **Total Benefits** **$88,462 *per person***	**Cumulative Benefits from 2006 to 2026** **All Aboriginal People** 21,639 x $30,770/person = $666 million 21,639 x $57,692/person = $1,248 million **All Aboriginal People** Increased tax revenue $666 million Cumulative Savings in program expenditures $1,248 million **Total Benefits** **$1,914 million ($1.9 B)**

Financial Benefits to NWT Of Eliminating Gaps

Since the Aboriginal population in the NWT should increase at the same rate as the Aboriginal population in the south, we will assume the same populations in 2026 as they were in 2006. The benefits to the NWT in 2026 alone could be increased tax revenue of $58.3 million and decreased social program expenditures of $139.8 million. That adds up to total benefits to the NWT of $198.1 million in 2026 alone.

As can be seen in the figures above, the study estimates that the cumulative benefit for the consolidated Canadian government of increased Aboriginal education and social well-being is up to $115 billion over the twenty year period of 2006-2026. Using the 2006 population of 1.3 million Aboriginal people, that is $88,462 per Aboriginal person in Canada.

Looking at the 20 year period of 2006-2026, the benefits to the NWT could be $666 million in increased tax revenue. The NWT would also save $1,235.5 million in program expenditures. That is a potential total benefit of $1,914 million ($1.9 B) to the NWT if Aboriginal people were to increase their education levels to the same level as other NWT residents were at in 2006.

Portrait of Excess Expenditures on the Aboriginal population

The Centre for the Study of Living Standards was established in August 1995. It is a non-profit, national, independent organization that seeks to contribute to a better understanding of trends in, and determinants of, productivity, living standards and economic and social well-being through research.

The work for the Educational Branch of Indian and North Affairs Canada by CSLS is entitled *The Effect Of Increasing Aboriginal Educational Attainment On The Labour Force, Output And The Fiscal Balance*. CSLS used 2006 information of excess expenditures on the Canadian Aboriginal population. Excess expenditure is established by finding the average cost to provide

the same service for all Canadians, then compare it to the cost for the Aboriginal population. Below is information that the CSLS used for its study:

1. Transfer Payments — $1.0 billion Excess Expenditures in 2006
- primarily in the form of social assistance
- Aboriginal people are 3 times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to use social assistance
- Aboriginal people are less likely to receive be benefits such as employment insurance, social security and pension plan expenditures as compared to non-Aboriginal people.

2. Protection of persons and property — $2.0 billion Excess Expenditures in 2006
- courts of law, corrections, and policing
- over 20% of prison populations; this is 8 times higher based on length of sentence, etc
- Homicide rates are six times higher than in the broader population.3 p. 16

3. Child and Family Services — $1.4 billion Excess Expenditures in 2006
- Aboriginal children make up 30-40% of the 76,000 children-in-care aged 0-14 years
- Aboriginal kids only make up 6% of the total age bracket

4. Social Housing — $0.3 billion Excess Expenditures in 2006
- Government programs aimed at providing affordable housing
- Social housing expenditures total a significant 42% more per person, for Aboriginal people.

5. Health Care — $1.2 billion Excess Expenditures in 2006
- Hospital care, medical care excluding hospital bills, preventative care and other services
- Health care expenditures total 12% more per person, for Aboriginal people.
- Death due to alcohol use is almost twice the rate of the general population
- Death due to illicit drugs is approximately three times the rate of the general population
- TB and diabetes among First Nations is three times that of the broader population.
- Suicide rates are 2.5 times higher among First Nations than the broader population.

Appendix C

ASAWG Members List

Many people were involved in developing the preliminary Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group (ASAWG) led the development of the Plan. ASAWG members and alternates were:

Dene Nation	Chief Bill Erasmus, Rosa Wah-Shee, and Charles Mantla
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	Sandra Elanik
NWT Métis Nation	Pearl Bird
North Slave Métis Alliance	Audrey Enge
Native Women's Association of the NWT	Lisa Duncan and Lena Pedersen
Northwest Territories Teachers' Association	Tammy Steinwand and David Reid
NWT Literacy Council	Helen Balanoff
DEA Superintendents	Nolan Swartzentruber and Lucy Lafferty
EC E- Advanced Education & Careers	Gloria Iatridis and Kathleen Mullin
ECE - Education & Culture	Roy Erasmus (ASAWG Chair)
ECE - Early Childhood & School Services	Rita Mueller and Angus Lennie
ECE - Operations & Development	Janet Grinsted and Cheryl Fennell
ECE - Public Affairs	Amy Doerksen
Aurora College	Sarah Wright-Cardinal and Joan Langevin
Health and Social Services-Addictions	Marlene Villebrun
Justice	Dawn Anderson

Appendix D: ASA Regional Forum Participants Lists

Sahtu ASA Regional Forum Participants

Colville Lake:	Deline:
Sharon Tutcho, DEA Kevin O'Keefe, Principal	Chief Raymond Tutcho Peter Menacho, President, Deline Land Corporation Dolphus Baton, Deline Elder Freda Taniton, Sahtu Secretariat Brenda Baton, Sahtu Secretariat Brian Wishart, Principal

Tulita:	Norman Wells:
Grand Chief Frank Andrew Gordon Yakeleya, President, Tulita Land Corporation Wilfred Lennie, Hamlet of Tulita Diane Doctor, Métis Land Corporation Terry Kunkle, DEA Chair Lorraine Kuer, Principal Jesse Campbell, TLC Coordinator	Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Sahtu Dene Council Tony Grandjambe, Norman Wells Land Corporation Norman Yakeleya, MLA, Sahtu Dudley C. Johnson, Mayor, Town of Norman Wells Heidi Hodgson-Deschene, DEA Pam Gray, DEA Shannon Barnett-Aikman, Principal Seamus Quigg, Superintendent Steve Rose, Assistant Superintendent Renee Closs, Student Support Consultant Sarah Baker, Regional Superintendent, ECE Cathy Mackeinzo, Income Support, ECE Sherri MacDuff, Career Development Officer, ECE

Fort Good Hope:	Yellowknife:
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Inuvik:	WAMP and Youth Participants:
Doug Robertson, Campus Director, Aurora College Marja Van Nieuwenhuyzen, Aurora College **Interpreters:** Alphonsine MacNeeley – Interpreter Laura Tobac - Interpreter	Jeremy Emerson, Western Arctic Moving Pictures Pablo Saranvanjo, WAMP Maddi Gray, student Dakota Miller, student Connor Kimmin, student Drayton Walker, student Siobhan Quigg, student Laura Wall, student Nathaniel Gregon, student Lynn Turo, student

Wekweètì:
Chief Charlie Football
Joe Dryneck, Community Government /TCSA Board
Nick Lamouelle, Community Government
Rod Ogden, Principal

Gamèti:
A/Grand Chief Alphonse Apples
Chief Eddie Chocolate
Sam Mantla Sr., Community Government
Matt Clements, Principal

Whatì:
Chief Alfonz Nitsiza
Sonny Zoe, Community Government
George Nitsiza, Community Government
Mary Adele Rabesca, Elder
Ted Nitsiza, TCSA Board Member
Blair Hagman, Principal

Yellowknife:
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Dan Daniels, Deputy Minister, ECE
Roy Erasmus, Assistant Deputy Minister, ECE
Julia Mott, Senior Advisor, ECE
Rita Mueller, Director, ECE
Janet Grinsted, Director, ECE
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Linda Kalbun, Coordinator, ECE
Amy Doerksen, Manager Public Affairs, ECE
David Reid, President, NWTTA
Jane Arychuk, Campus Director, Aurora College
Wendy McPherson, Superintendent, ECE

Behchokǫ̀:
Chief Clifford Daniels
Jane Weyallon, Community Government
Nora Wedzin, Community Government
Laura Duncan, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Joe Erasmus, Elder
Michael Ewen, Principal, Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School
Patti Turner, Principal, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School
Ted Blondin, TCSA Chair
Joe Mackenzie, TCSA Board Member
Mabel Gon, TCSA Board Member
Jim Martin, TCSA CEO
James Robinson, TCSA Education Director
Kyle Kelly, TCSA Director of Finance and Admin
Tammy Steinwand, TCSA Tłı̨chǫ Language and Culture Coordinator
Rosa Mantla, TCSA Tłı̨chǫ Language and Culture Coordinator
Ryan Hewlett, TCSA Health Manager
Susan Hopkins, TCSA Student Support Coordinator
Cecilia Zoe-Martin, TCSA Counsellor
Cecilia Migwi, TCSA Counsellor
Carolyne Whenham, TCSA Literacy Coordinator
Blanche Shabaghlian, TCSA Manager of Wellness
Lisa Robinson, TCSA K-12 Curriculum Coordinator
Louise Richardson, TCSA Early Childhood Coordinator
Terri Douglas, TCSA Early Childhood Coordinator
Anita Daniels, CART Member
George Bailey, CART Member
Mas[illegible] Mantla, CART Member
Leona Lafferty, CART Member

Interpreters:
Violet Mackenzie – Interpreter
Mary Rose Blackduck - Interpreter

Youth Participants:
Rashinda Eyakfwo, Youth Member
Roxanne Kotchilea, Youth Member
Shawn Gon, Youth Member
Destiny Rabesca, Youth Member
Julian Gon, Youth Member

Dehcho ASA Regional Forum Participants

Wrigley:	**Fort Simpson:**
Chief Tim Lennie Gloria Hardisty, DEA Chair Lisa Moses, DDEC Trustee Kent Bratton, Principal Trent Cli, Youth Alisha Moses, Youth	Chief Jim Antoine Marie Lafferty, Métis Local President Kevin Menicoche, MLA, Nahendeh Betty Hardisty, DEA Chair Martina Norwegian, DDEC Chair Terry Jaffray, Superintendent, DDEC Brian Jaffray, DDEC staff Andy Norwegian, DDEC staff Kiatch Nahanni, DDEC staff Nicki Crawley, DDEC staff Freda Blyth, Principal, Thomas Simpson Secondary School Chris Kingsbury, Principal, Bompas Elementary School Charles Gargan, Youth Sylvia Pasqua-Matte, Youth

Fort Liard:	**Nahanni Butte:**
Melanie Louie, DEA Chair Reed Smith, Principal Monica Berreault, Youth	Chief Fred Tesou Joan Ekotla, DEA Chair Marlene Konisenta, DDEC Trustee Wayne Ingarfield, Principal Lori Bertrand, Youth Mindy Tsetso, Youth

Jean Marie River:	**Trout Lake:**
Chief Isadore Simon Margaret Ireland, DEA Chair Yvonne Norwegian, DDEC Trustee Kyla Norwegian, Youth Alisha Grossette, Youth	Ruby Jumbo, DEA Chair Sharon Kotchea, DDEC Trustee Sheyenne Jumbo, Youth Timothy Pierre, Youth

Fort Providence:	**Kakisa:**
Grand Chief Sam Gargan, Dehcho First Nations Chief Joachim Bonnetrouge Peter Canadien, DDEC Trustee Theresa Bonnetrouge, A/Principal Ben Vandell, Youth Shyanna Sabourin, Youth	George Urban, Principal Dalton Simba, Youth

Yellowknife:	**Fort Smith:**
Minister Jackson Lafferty Dan Daniels, Deputy Minister, ECE Roy Erasmus, Assistant Deputy Minister, ECE Rita Mueller, Director, ECE Catherine Boyd, Director, ECE Don Morrison, Coordinator, ECE Ron Cleary, Coordinator, ECE Adrian Richards, Coordinator, ECE Teresa Watson, Coordinator, ECE Linda Kalbun, Coordinator, ECE Amy Doerksen, Manager Public Affairs, ECE David Reid, President, NWTTA	Sarah Wright-Cardinal, President, Aurora College Jeff O'Keefe, Campus Director, Aurora College **Interpreters:** Mary Jane Cazon – Interpreter Sarah Tetso - Interpreter

Yellowknife ASA Forum Participants

Yellowknives Dene First Nation: Chief Eddie Sangris Chief Ted Tsetta Jonas Sangris, Elder Eddie Sikyea, Elder Phil Liske, Elder Alfred Baillargeon, Elder Bobby Drygeese, YKDFN Councillor PJ Goulet, YKDFN Councillor Jennifer Drygeese, Chekoa Program Jeannette Goldney, Education Liaison Coordinator	**Yellowknife Catholic Schools:** Mary Vane, Chair Barb MacDonald, Trustee Claudia Parker, Superintendent John Bowden, Assistant Superintendent Coleen McDonald, Principal, St. Patrick High School Simone Gessler, Principal, Weledeh Catholic School Dianne Lafferty, Aboriginal Education Coordinator Melody Parker, Do Edaezhe Program Coordinator

Yellowknife Education District No. 1: Reanna Erasmus, Trustee, Yellowknife Education District 1 Blake Lyons, Trustee,Yellowknife Education District 1 Natasha Landry, Chair, Dettah DEA Berna Martin, Trustee, Dettah DEA Cecilia Beaulieu, Ndilo Education Committee Chair Pat Teskey, Principal, Ecole Sir John Franklin Paul Bennett, Principal, JH Sissons Shirley Zouboules, Assistant Principal, Range Lake North School Sharon Oldford, Principal, N.J. MacPherson Rachelle Simmons, Principal, William McDonald School Deborah Maguire, Principal, Mildred Hall Elementary School Angela James, Principal,K'alemi Dene School Lea Lamoureux, Principal, Kaw Tay Whee School Metro Huculak, Superintendent Mattie MacNeil, Aboriginal Education Coordinator Sheila Stewart, Aboriginal Language Teacher Doreen Cleary, SJF Counsellor Jayden James, Weledeh Youth Zhalaani Drygeese, Weledeh Youth Jeff Crapeau, Weledeh Youth	**Commission Scolaire Francophone:** Suzette Montreuil, Chairperson Yvonne Careen, Principal, École Allain St. Cyr **ECE, Yellowknife:** Minister Jackson Lafferty Gloria Iatridis, Assistant Deputy Minister, ECE Roy Erasmus, Assistant Deputy Minister, ECE Julia Mott, Senior Advisor, ECE Rita Mueller, Director, ECE John Stewart, Coordinator, ECE Patrick Sullivan, Coordinator, ECE Susan Catlin, Coordinator, ECE Adrian Richards, Coordinator, ECE Elaine Stewart, Coordinator, ECE Teresa Watson, Coordinator, ECE Blake Wile, Coordinator, ECE Ron Cleary, Coordinator, ECE Linda Kalbun, Coordinator, ECE Shannon Barnett-Aikman, Coordinator, ECE Amy Doerksen, Manager Public Affairs, ECE Ashley Green, Public Affairs, ECE

Aurora College: Jane Arychuk, Campus Director, Yellowknife **Interpreters:** Lena Drygeese, Interpreter Mary Rose Sundberg, Interpreter	**Dene Nation:** National Chief Bill Erasmus **Yellowknife MLAs:** Robert Hawkins, MLA, Yellowknife Centre Bob Bromley, MLA, Weledeh Wendy Bisaro, MLA, Frame Lake **ASA Working Group:** Marlene Villebrun, HSS, Mental Health Specialist David Reid, NWTTA President

South Slave ASA Regional Forum Participants

K'atl'odeeche:	Hay River:
Chief Roy Fabian Lyle Fabian, KFN Councillor Clara Sabourin, KFN Councillor Pat Martel, KFN Elder Shirley Lamalice, KFN Wellness Worker Georgina Fabian, KFN Observer Doug Cardinal, KFN Observer Raymond Sonfrere, Yamozha Kue Society Andy Cardinal, DEA Doug Lamalice, DEA Ian Patterson, Principal	Paul Harrington, Hay River Métis Council, President Jane Groenwegen, MLA, Hay River South Diana Yeager, CA for Paul Delorey, MLA, Hay River North Kandis Jameson, DEA Paul Theriault, Principal, Diamond Jenness Secondary School Chris Philpotts, Principal, Harry Camsell School Geoff Buerger, Principal, Princess Alexander School John Bob Landry, DJSS Youth delegate Tali Sound, DJSS Youth delegate Mike St. Amour, CSFTNO, DEA representative Sophie Call, CSFTNO, Principal - École Boreale Jordan Hordal, CSFTNO, EB Student - video Karen Cooper, ECE - South Slave Service Centre

Yellowknife:	Fort Smith:
Minister Jackson Lafferty Dan Daniels, Deputy Minister, ECE Gloria Iatridis, ADM, ECE Roy Erasmus, ADM, ECE Janet Grinsted, Director, ECE Rita Mueller, Director, ECE Philippe Brûlot, CSFTNO, Superintendent David Reid, NWTTA, President Patrick Sullivan, Coordinator, ECE Susan Catlin, Coordinator, ECE Teresa Watson, Coordinator, ECE Ron Cleary, Coordinator, ECE Tom Aikman, Coordinator, ECE Linda Kalbun, Coordinator, ECE Amy Doerksen, Manager Public Affairs, ECE **Interpreters:** Dennis Drygeese – Interpreter Sarah Basil – Interpreter Joe Tambour - Interpreter	Connie Benwell, Salt River FN Councillor Jeanne Marie Jewell, Salt River FN Councillor Pearl Bird, ASA Working Group, NWT Métis Nation J. Michael Miltenberger, MLA, Thebacha Brenda Johnston, Deputy Mayor, Town of Fort Smith Ann Pischinger, Chair, SSDEC Jason Lepine, DEA Julie Lys, DEA Al Karasiuk, Principal, PW Kaeser High School Craig Walsh, Principal, Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary School Curtis Brown, Superintendent, SSDEC Brent Kaulback, Assistant Superintendent, SSDEC Jayne Murray, Public Affairs, SSDEC Jacqueline McLean, Regional Superintendent, ECE Jeff O'Keefe, Campus Director, Aurora College Dave Porter, Aurora College

Lutsel K'e:	Fort Resolution:
Emily Saunders, Councillor, Lutsel K'e First Nation Dennis Drygeese, DEA Angie Lantz, DEA Sheila Cavanagh, Principal Jake Basil, Youth delegate	Violet Bailey, Deninu Kue First Nation Dave Pierrot, Hamlet of Fort Resolution Cara Carriere, DEA Bess Ann McKay, DEA Dan Summers, Principal Paul Boucher, Youth delegate

Beaufort-Delta ASA Regional Forum Participants

Ulukhaktok: Mary Kudlak, DEA Chair Sadie Joss, DEA Joshua Oliktoak, Hamlet Charles Bryant, Principal Brandon Okheena, Youth Simon Kudlak, Youth	**Sachs Harbour:** Bambi Amos, DEA Chair Priscilla Haogak, Mayor
Paulatuk: Ray Ruben, Mayor Gilbert Thrasher Sr., Vice-Chairperson, BDEC /IRC Lily Ann Green, DEA Jessica Schmidt, Principal Bessie Lennie, Youth	**Tuktoyaktuk:** John Stuart Jr., TCC Maureen Pokiak, DEA Chair Agnes Cudmore, Principal Effie Gruben, Youth
Aklavik: Annie Buckle, DEA Chair Gladys Edwards, DEA Velma Illasiak, Principal Alex Illasiak, Elder Charmaine Norman Goose, Youth	**Fort McPherson:** Liz Wright, DEA Chair Anita Koe, DEA Shirley Snowshoe, Vice-Principal Maria Snowshoe, Youth
Tsiigehtchic: Anna May McLeod, DEA Chair Shelia Cardinal Blake, DEA Cynthia Wagner, Principal Chevaughn Blake, Youth **Yellowknife:** Minister Jackson Lafferty Morven MacPherson, Executive Assistant Dan Daniels, Deputy Minister, ECE Julia Mott, Senior Advisor, ECE Roy Erasmus, ADM, ECE Rita Mueller, Director, ECE Kathleen Mullin, Assistant Director, ECE Susan Hopkins, Coordinator, ECE Teresa Watson, Coordinator, ECE Blake Wile, Coordinator, ECE Ron Cleary, Coordinator, ECE Linda Kalbun, Coordinator, ECE Adrian Richards, Coordinator, ECE Vanessa Baron, Summer Student, ECE Brandee Penney-Keeping, Coordinator, ECE Amy Doerksen, Manager Public Affairs, ECE Angela James, ECE	**Inuvik:** Nellie Cournoyea, President, IRC Richard Nerysoo, President, GTC Mary Ann Ross, GTC, Vice-President Robert Charlie, GTC, Director Gwich'in Services Sandra Elanik, IRC, Manager, IEF Annie Modeste, Elder Sarah Jerome, Elder/NWT Language Commissioner Robert C. McLeod, MLA, Inuvik Twin Lakes Paul Walter, DEA Chair Paul Devlin, DEA Roy Cole, BDEC, Superintendent Denise Kurszewski, BDEC, Assistant Superintendent Jean Boudreau, BDEC, Supervisor of Schools Liz Hansen, Gwich'in L&C Coordinator Rosemarie Kirby, Inuvialuit L&C Coordinator Camellia Gray, BDEC, Public Affairs Coordinator Reg Carpenter, BDEC, Math & Science Consultant Sandy Carpenter, BDEC, LA/SS Consultant Roman Mahnic, SHSS Principal Janette Vlanich, SAMS Principal Shane Brewster, NWTTA Doug Robertson, Aurora College, Director Marja van Nieuwenhuyzen, Aurora College Helen Sullivan, Regional Superintendent, ECE

ABORIGINAL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

a status report

may, 2011

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background:

The future of the Northwest Territories (NWT) depends on the strength of our people. Our success as a Northern society depends on our young people having the skills and knowledge to fully participate as Northern and global citizens. Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing segment of our population. They play a key role in the NWT's future. They have the responsibility to carry on Aboriginal languages and traditions, as well as have the skills and knowledge to shape Northern society in ways that are meaningful to Northerners, Canadians, and others around the globe.

When people go out on the land they prepare by putting all the tools and other things they need in a bag and carrying it along with them. Today education is a main tool.

Minister Jackson Lafferty

Almost two-thirds (64%) of Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the NWT are Aboriginal. Today, more Aboriginal students are staying in school longer and graduating from high school than in previous decades. In 1978, 10% of NWT high school graduates were Aboriginal students. In 2008, almost half of NWT high school graduates were Aboriginal students.

While education levels are improving, there remains a significant gap in education outcomes for Aboriginal students. Functional Grade Level (FGL) reporting shows significant educational achievement gaps between Aboriginal and other students. FGLs show that 53% of Aboriginal students in grade three in the NWT were reported as working on Grade level curriculum in English Language Arts compared to 88% of other students. These FGL results correlate with graduation rates. In 2009, 44% of Aboriginal students in the NWT graduated from high school compared to 70% of other students.

There are several factors that contribute to educational achievement gaps between Aboriginal and other students. Absenteeism is a contributing factor. It is estimated that the average Aboriginal student in the NWT misses over 41 days of school each year. This means that by the end of grade nine the average NWT Aboriginal student has missed two years of schooling. This is more than twice the amount of schooling that other students miss. The relative newness of formal education in a number of communities is also a factor where students, who are now adults and parents, were not able to complete their own education. Limited economic and

employment opportunities may also be serving as a disincentive towards higher levels of education.

Education success in the NWT is largely defined around academic success. However, it is also important to ensure that education success addresses other key purposes of public education, namely providing students with the knowledge, skills and attitude to become confident and responsible citizens of their communities and to become the leaders of tomorrow. Aboriginal youth need to be, as the Tłı̨chǫ region refers to, 'strong like two people'. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is just one of the players responsible for ensuring that Aboriginal youth have the skills and knowledge needed for their future.

the aboriginal student achievement working group:

In 2009, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment directed the department to focus on eliminating the educational achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students. This is in accordance with the 16th Legislative Assembly's goal of "Healthy, Educated People" and a "Strong and Independent North Built on Partnerships" discussed in *Northerners Working Together*.

The Members of the Legislative Assembly also identified Strategic Initiatives to achieve these goals and priorities. Under the Building our Future Strategic Initiative a key action area is to Expand Programming for Children and Youth. ECE's Aboriginal Student Achievement (ASA) initiative will expand programming for children and youth by developing and implementing a remedial plan with partners through a cost-shared arrangement.

When the school and parents are committed to working together there are positive results.

Bill Erasmus, Dene National Chief

In 2009/10 ECE held a series of partners' workshops to examine best practices and approaches to improving Aboriginal student achievement. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group (ASAWG) evolved from these workshops.

The ASAWG was established for a one-year period to develop a draft NWT-wide education plan to eliminate the educational achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students. It's mandate was to consider and make recommendations on:

- early childhood and child care supports to ready young children for school;
- Kindergarten to Grade 12 supports to enable students to stay in, and succeed in school; and
- active engagement of parents, communities, and their leaders in supporting Aboriginal student achievement.

The ASAWG had membership from four Aboriginal organizations, a voluntary sector literacy organization, the NWT Teachers' Association, school boards and Aurora College, as well as three GNWT departments. Industry representatives also participated in ASAWG meetings.

The ASAWG had six meetings between April 2009 and April 2010. The Working Group examined key issues and promising practices for improving Aboriginal student achievement. It launched

pilot projects in each region and a territorial-wide communication strategy to encourage Aboriginal student achievement. ASAWG members also presented its priorities for closing the gap between Aboriginal and other students, to their constituents and members. The draft plan is the result of the ASAWG's work.

The Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group (ASAWG) led the development of the draft Plan. ASAWG members and alternates are:

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC)	Sandra Elanik
Dene Nation	Bill Erasmus, Rosa Wah-shee and Charles Mantla
NWT Metis Nation	Pearl Bird and Audrey Enge
Native Women's Association of the NWT	Lisa Duncan and Lena Pedersen
Northwest Territories Teachers' Assoc.	Tammy Steinwand and David Reid
NWT Literacy Council	Helen Balanoff
Aurora College	Sarah Wright-Cardinal and Joan Langevin
DEC Superintendents	Nolan Swartzentruber and Lucy Lafferty
ECE- Advanced Education & Income Security	Gloria Iatridis and Kathleen Mullin
ECE - Education & Culture	Roy Erasmus (Chair)
ECE - Early Childhood & School Services	Rita Mueller and Angus Lennie
ECE – Education Operations & Development	Janet Grinsted and Cheryl Fennell (ASA Interim Coordinator)
ECE - Public Affairs	Amy Doerksen
Health and Social Services-Addictions	Marlene Villebrun
Justice	Dawn Anderson

Element 3: Helping parents
Expected Outcomes: • Parents learning essential parenting skills through programs that teach and support good nutrition, literacy, self-esteem, and child development.

Partners said that:

- Parenting and parental involvement are central to student successes.
- Parents need to be supported to learn essential parenting skills.
- Programs targeting parents that are flexible and grounded in the culture and language of the local community are needed. These programs would teach good nutrition, literacy, self-esteem, and child development practices. These programs would build on successful models/practices and existing programs such as Health and Social Services' Healthy Family Program and the NWT Literacy Council's family literacy program.

Element 4: Partnering with Health and Social Services for Children
Expected Outcomes: • Assessment of all babies and children six years of age and younger. • All babies and children six years of age and younger meeting health and developmental benchmarks. • All young children receiving interventions when required. • All children with special needs receiving the support they need.

Partners said that:

- The *Early Childhood Framework for Action* is a broad five to ten year plan that guides the development of young children six years of age and younger. It deals with everything from childcare licensing to policy for early childhood programs. The Framework guides the partnership between GNWT Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment. The *Early Childhood Framework for Action* needs to be updated/revised and resources need to be allocated to support its implementation.

aboriginal student achievement education plan priorities:

The draft Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan is a collaborative effort to eliminate the achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students in the NWT. The draft Plan has four (4) priorities and ten (10) elements.

Early Childhood and Childcare – with the elements of:

- early childhood and childcare that reflects the local community and culture;
- strengthening Kindergarten programming and curriculum;
- helping parents; and
- partnering with NWT Health and Social Services to improve the quality of programs and services for children.

Student and Family Support - with the elements of:

- working toward positive student-home-school relationships;
- helping youth complete their education; and
- providing tools and resources to help students progress through schooling.

Aboriginal Language Curriculum and Resource Development - with the elements:

- developing Aboriginal language curriculum and resources for Kindergarten to Grade 12; and
- having more NWT Aboriginal language instructors, teachers, resources and mentors.

Literacy - with the element of:

- increasing and improving literacy skills of all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

partners' views on asawg priorities:

The ASAWG members sought input from their respective areas on Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan priorities. Fourteen (14) agencies provided input. This input was the focus of discussions at the final ASAWG meeting in April 2010. Partners' input is summarized below in light of ASAWG priorities and expected outcomes.

priority 1: early childhood and childcare

Element 1: Quality early childhood and childcare reflecting local community and culture
Expected Outcomes: • Quality school early childhood and child care programs that meet the child's development needs and reflect the local community and culture. • Schools with quality early childhood and child care facilities that meet health and nutrition, sanitation, safety, and physical space standards and reflect the local community and culture. • Competitive wages and benefits for trained early childhood and child care staff, working in school and community-based facilities.

Partners said that:

- The first step to developing quality early childhood programs and childcare services is to consult with the community. Consultations would determine how to set up quality programs/services that are grounded in the culture and language of the local community and actively engage elders.

- Clear definitions are needed of the various types of programs and services that are typically available for children six years of age and younger (e.g. childcare, early childhood, family, preschool, junior kindergarten and kindergarten programs).

- Planning for quality early childhood programs and childcare services would benefit from a review of past efforts to implement universal childcare in the NWT.

- Quality early childhood programs and childcare services can be school and/or community based but parents in every NWT community should have access to affordable, quality programs and services. Priority should be given to communities without any programs/services or inadequate programs/services.

There are many problems that plague our students so we all have to work together to improve successes.

Chief Eddie Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation

- Every youth enrolled in an education/training program who does not have funding for childcare supports, should have access to free, quality childcare.

- Early childhood and childcare programs should be housed in facilities that meet health, sanitation, safety, and physical space standards. In cases where there are no existing programs and/or space, the school can be a good place to locate early childhood programs and childcare services.

- It is important to build on successful models and practices (e.g. Aboriginal Head Start, Health and Social Services' Healthy Family Program, and school-based programs) and enhance and complement existing programs.

- Regardless of the location of the program, competitive wages and benefits and training should be available to early childhood and child care staff. Training and equality among community and school programs are important.

Element 2: Kindergarten
Expected Outcomes: - Full-day compulsory kindergarten for all five year old children in the NWT. - Optional junior kindergarten for four year old children in the NWT.

Partners said that:

- Extensive consultation is needed with parents, schools, and communities to determine appropriate approaches to childcare services and early childhood programs.

- Compulsory full-day kindergarten for all five-year old children and optional junior kindergarten for four-year old children could both negatively and positively impact early childhood programming options. On the positive side, it could make early childhood programs available where currently none exist. On the negative side, it could make it difficult for other early childhood programs/services including privately run services to compete.

- It is preferable to take a comprehensive rather than a compulsory or mandatory approach to childcare services and early childhood programs. A comprehensive

approach will consider the challenges attracting and engaging young children in early childhood programs, local languages and cultures, and parental and elder involvement in early childhood.

To inspire learning we need to know what young people value and what is important to them.

Robert Hawkins, MLA
Yellowknife Centre

- More joint initiatives between Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment are needed at the local and regional levels including on the front-line.

priority 2: student and family support

Element 5: Positive student-home-school relationships.
Expected Outcomes: • Trained counsellors in all NWT schools with more than 50 students. • Trained district-based counsellors to work with small schools with less than 50 students. • School staff training and cultural orientation to promote understanding of local community and culture. • Student counselling and interventions that reflect the local community and culture. • More interagency training to involve and support students in and outside the school. • More community support for students attending school regularly and achieving academic success.

Partners said that:

- Trained in-school counsellors are needed at all levels from early childhood to postsecondary to help students address the many issues that impact on their school successes.
- Effective counsellors have diverse skills and sound knowledge of the social and cultural environment of the students they work with.
- There is a need to strengthen connections between the home and school to improve relationships with parents and out-of-school supports for students.
- The previous school-community counsellor program may be a model to follow.

Everyone should think about their responsibility for language.

Ted Blondin, Chair Tlicho Community Services Agency

Element 6: Helping NWT youth complete their education
Expected Outcomes: • Alternative education programs accessible to more NWT youth. • Stronger community-based partnerships among community schools and Aurora College. • More programs to support youth to attend school regularly, stay in school, and graduate from Grade 12. • More programs that promote positive self-esteem among youth. • School and workplace programs to promote the school-work connection.

Partners said that:

- Every effort has to be made to support youth to successfully complete their education.

- Aboriginal students need help successfully navigating through the processes of enrolling, and transitioning into postsecondary institutions.

- NWT Student Financial Assistance (NWTSFA) and contributions from Aboriginal organizations help students at a postsecondary level but similar financial support may not be available for those endeavouring to finish high school. Financial aid should be prioritized for those seeking to complete high school.

We need a vision that enables everyone to work together.

Cecilia Beaulieu, Chair Ndilo Education Committee

- Alternative education programs and Aurora College provide other pathways for students to complete their education. These options need to be better supported.

- This ASAWG priority should be addressed within the context of ECE's recent *Youth Literacy Gap Analysis* report (2010).

Element 7: Providing tools to help kids progress through schooling

Expected Outcomes:

- Resources for children and youth to make successful transition from:
  - home to pre-school,
  - pre-school to school,
  - elementary school to junior high,
  - junior high to high school, and
  - high school to postsecondary school.
- More community belonging and support to help students make transitions.
- A plan to overcome barriers like childcare and financial assistance that prevent youth from staying in, and succeeding in school.
- More alternative education programs accessible to youth.
- Homework programs, tutoring programs, and library support to help students progress in school.

Partners said that:

- Tools are only part of the answer. A broad range of supports including alternative programs are needed.

- This priority and the previous priority for helping NWT youth complete their education, are similar.

priority 3: aboriginal language curriculum and resource development

Element 8: Develop Aboriginal language curriculum and resources
Expected Outcomes: - An Aboriginal language curriculum by 2013 to revitalize, promote, and sustain NWT Aboriginal languages. - Learning from Aboriginal people elsewhere about Aboriginal language curriculum development. - Participation from Aboriginal language curriculum resource people.

Partners said that:

- An Aboriginal language curriculum and resources are urgently required. However, is the proposed time frame realistic? Are the resources available to develop the curriculum. Are the people in place to implement it?
- ECE should continue to work toward updating the Kindergarten to Grade 9 Dene Language Curriculum.
- There is a need to revisit the Curriculum Review Development Implementation (CRDI) cycle to ensure that ECE's Culture-Based Education Policy is reflected.
- ECE should continue to use and build on culture based resources, specifically *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*, as the foundation for curriculum delivery. Teacher resources should be enhanced.
- Stronger connections need to be made with the follow-up work being done from the March 2010 Aboriginal Languages Symposium, *Northwest Territories Aboriginal Languages Plan – A Shared Responsibility* report.

School attendance is the key to success and parents have a main role to play.

Grand Chief Frank Andrew, Sahtu Dene Council

Element 9: NWT Aboriginal language instructors, resources, and mentors
Expected Outcomes: - Stronger Aurora College NWT Aboriginal language instructors' program. - Well-trained Aboriginal teachers able to teach the NWT Aboriginal language curriculum. - Relationships between the Teacher Education Program and the Teaching and Learning Centres for the development of Aboriginal language teacher resource materials. - A mentorship program to help support Aboriginal language teachers in their work. - Aboriginal parents and community members engaged in the school as speakers and carriers of their language and culture.

Partners said that:

- Elders have a vital role to play as instructors, resource people, and mentors. Innovative approaches and more supports including training are needed to support the work of elders and other Aboriginal language instructors, resources, and mentors.

- Two steps that could be taken to support this priority are:
  1) promoting teaching as a career choice; and
  2) learning from efforts to recruit and retain northern nurses and social workers.

- Stronger connections need to be made with the follow-up work being undertaken from the March 2010 Aboriginal Languages Symposium report, *Northwest Territories' Aboriginal Languages: A Shared Responsibility*.

priority 4: literacy

Element 10: Increase and improve literacy skills
Expected Outcomes: - A family literacy coordinator to support development of literacy skills with families of school aged children. - Collaboration with literacy partners to evaluate and support family literacy activities. - Literacy resource centres in all NWT communities. - More school-aged children with access to the resources needed for their school courses. - Expansion of current successful NWT literacy initiatives. - More NWT students reading at or above their grade level according to Canadian literacy standards.

Partners said that:

- It is very important to strengthen capacity and fund community-based and regional literacy programs.

- Many groups, regions, and communities are involved in successful literacy programs. These should be supported and used as models in other regions/communities. Some successful literacy programs are the South Slave District Education Council's Literacy Leadership Initiative, the NWT Literacy Council's family literacy programs, and various school and community library programs.

- The role and responsibilities of a family literacy coordinator position(s) should be clarified. Some people think that each NWT region should have a coordinator. Others think that the position(s) should be broadened beyond family literacy to focus on literacy in general (e.g. literacy coordinator(s).

- Regionally - based literacy position(s) would strengthen the capacity of schools and the NWT Literacy Council to support effective family literacy programming.

Education is critical to us all and to breaking dependencies and encouraging full participation in our communities.

J. Michael Miltenberger, MLA Thebacha

regional meetings - outline and goals:

Over the past year the Minister provided the draft Plan to Aboriginal and education leaders in the regions, undertaking a series of regional consultation meetings in order to accomplish a number of goals:

- to test the draft Plan with a wider audience;
- for leaders to lend their support to the draft Plan or provide input to reshape it; and
- for political leaders, education leaders, and frontline staff to discuss and arrive at action and implementation plans for their communities based on the themes of the draft Plan as accepted.

Meeting Plan:

Each regional meeting was 3 days in duration. The first two days were plenary sessions and group visioning exercises, on the final day participants broke into community groups to discuss specific actions for their community based on the previous days' discussions. Interpreters for the local Aboriginal language were available throughout on request. The meetings were co-chaired by ECE Minister Jackson Lafferty, the regional Aboriginal leaders and the District Education Authority Chair. They took place during the following times:

September 28 – 30, 2010	Norman Wells	Sahtu region
November 17 – 19	Behchokǫ̀	Tłı̨chǫ region
January 5 – 7, 2011	Fort Simpson	Deh Cho region
January 18 – 20	Yellowknife	North Slave/Akaitcho region
April 5 – 7	Hay River	South Slave region
May 3 – 5	Inuvik	Beaufort Delta region

Representatives from each community were invited to their regional meeting. The general meeting outline for each region was consistent but respected and reflected regional cultural differences.

The draft Plan was distributed to participants in advance, along with discussion questions, to facilitate informed discussion.

We need to continue traditional teachings but we also need to teach youth the skills to become doctors and lawyers so they have more opportunity to survive and contribute.

Chief Ted Tsetta, Yellowknives Dene First Nation

Meeting Framework:

Day 1:

ECE provided a presentation outlining the following:

- the mandate of the Aboriginal Student Achievement program, working group members;
- work undertaken to date, including the social marketing campaign;
- main themes of the draft Education Plan;
- the input process into the draft Education Plan; and
- next steps and timelines.

Leaders discussed the education vision and goals for their region, as well as the main themes of the draft Plan and their significance to the region. Frontline workers and other stakeholders observed the discussion in order to be prepared for day 3, although ultimately were invited to participate fully in the entire meeting. ECE staff were in attendance as technical advisors and to answer specific operational questions.

Day 2:

Participants discussed and provided feedback on the main themes of the draft Plan guided by the leaders vision and direction provided on day 1 and based on the questions provided in advance.

Every participant had the opportunity to discuss each theme during rotating workshops.

Each working group had a facilitator and recorder and an interpreter where requested.

In schools, real power and energy is generated through relationships. The patterns of relationships and the capacities to form them are more important than tasks, functions, roles and positions.

Roy Cole, Superintendent, Beaufort Delta Education Council

Day 3:

The focus of the day was on future planning and the beginnings of community action plans.

The outcome of the three days was a foundation document to guide the region's K-12 focus and form part of the overall Education Plan.

What We Heard in the Regional Forums:

Participants in the regional forums confirmed that the four key pillars identified by the ASA working group are indeed the four main areas of primary focus, namely early childhood, literacy, student and family supports and Aboriginal language curriculum and resource development.

Participants also agreed that many people and organizations have a role and responsibility for the education of students. This responsibility is shared between schools, educators, parents, families, regional and community leaders, employers, and others in the community.

Participants also agreed that it is important for all stakeholders to work closely together and have strong working relationships that support the education of students. This was evidenced by the commitment of community leaders to work together to support students in obtaining the education outcomes they desire.

Some common themes identified in all regional meetings include:

- Partners should work together to improve parental involvement in their children's education and a variety of supports should be provided for parents;
- More focus is required on early childhood programs and services;
- Each community should have a plan and perhaps a committee to work on improving their students' achievement;
- More classroom time is needed for languages and culture-based education;
- Improve communication between leaders and educators so they can continue to work together effectively;
- Improve student attendance;
- Improve technology capabilities;
- School needs to be an encouraging, safe environment for students; and
- Address social challenges such as poverty, addictions and bullying.

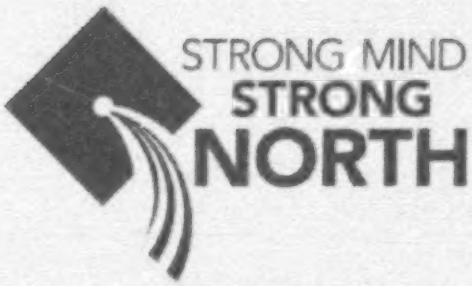
Parents and grandparents play an important role in supporting the success of our children.

Pearl Bird, NWT Métis Nation

Follow Up:

The Education Plan will be produced containing information for each region describing the outcome of the regional meetings including the vision and goals, priorities and action plan. This document will be shared with the participants as a guide for future investments, measurement and evaluation.

The completed Education Plan will be tabled in the August 2011 session and will be a transitional initiative for the consideration of the next Assembly.



appendix a

asa pilot projects:

1. **Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council**
   Community/School: Tuktoyaktuk, Mangilaluk

   Building Achievement through Improved Attendance

   - Monthly attendance awards open to all students K-12
   - Expand extra-curricular activities for week's attendance greater than 80%
   - On the land activities
   - Public awareness program on attendance
   - Counselling for students with attendance issues
   - School to host meals for students, parents, teachers 2 times over school year
   - Contact with home will focus on student's education
   - Provide taxi rides/alarm clocks if necessary

   - The BDDEC is contributing $25K matching funds

2. **Dehcho Divisional Education Council**

   Regional School Counsellor

   - Full-time position provides service for all grade levels
   - provide support and counselling to students and their families for attendance
   - offer workshops on parenting, visit homes, work with children in school setting
   - For all Dehcho schools - with emphasis on greatest needs

   - Divisional Education Council providing $75K plus in-kind support from Dehcho schools and Dehcho Health and Social Services (social worker)

3. **Sahtu Divisional Education Council**
   Colville Lake

   Attendance Initiatives

   - Hot healthy breakfast for all students every Friday
   - Rewards for high school students each week for perfect attendance includes:
     - Co-op gift certificate weekly

- Pizza/movie night at school bi-weekly
- Computer Literacy Night
- Gas draw for 5 gallons of gas on a bi-weekly basis
- Fresh fruit mornings for all students

- $25K matching funds:
  1. Behdzi Ahda First Nation is providing $5K;
  2. Colville School & community volunteers provide $20K in-kind support.

4. **Tłı̨chǫ Divisional Education Council**

Behchokǫ̀: Chief Jimmy Bruneau and Elizabeth MacKenzie Elementary

Attend for Success

- Multi-media person will help students develop attendance related videos
- Each school will have a small extra-curricular club
- Post videos on YouTube, TG Facebook site, TCSA website at www..ca
- CBC North may use messages as public service announcements
- Print campaign to promote attendance --in English and Tłı̨chǫ
- Elder to make home visits every two weeks with a school employee
- School will Celebrate Successes ie. pencils that say "100% Attendance"
  - honoring perfect attendance at assemblies

- TCSA is providing $25k; also in-kind funding from EMES and CJBS

5. **South Slave Divisional Education Council**

Katlodeechee: Chief Sunrise Education Centre

Get R.E.A.L. - Return, Earn And Learn

- Alternative high school program to keep or attract at risk students
- Earn industry recognized certificates i.e.-first aid, WHMIS, Service Excellence
- Students will work on High School courses at their own pace
- Evening hours in coordination with the Youth Centre
- Students will participate in a school based catering business
- Credits will be packaged if meet required expectations (CTS/core subjects)
- Students will do catering for program and things like breakfast program

- SSDEC/ DEA funding $35K

- K'atlodeeche First Nation in-kind contribution *long term use* of a building

6. **Yellowknife Education District No. 1**

Yellowknife: Sir John Franklin High School

SJF High School Transition Program

- For Aboriginal students at risk of leaving school before completion, when moving from grade 8 to high school; or disengaged Gr. 9-12 students

1. Transition Liaison Counsellor for counselling and intervention
    - Work with "at risk" incoming and struggling Aboriginal students
    - Department will maintain records

2. Transition Liaison Analyst
    - Establish baseline data and data collection monitoring system

- Over $50,000 in-kind contributions by YK #1's partners

7. **Yellowknives Dene First Nation**

Dettah: Kaw Tay Whee School

Five Main Areas of Focus

- Increased attendance, and decreased lateness
- Increased access to and education related to healthy food choices
- Increased education related to healthy activity choices and outdoor living
- Increased education related to the everyday use of literacy skills
- Increased opportunity for learning opportunities outside classroom

- Over $25,000 in-kind contributions from Literacy and Health Promotion

8. **Yellowknives Dene First Nation**

Ndilo: K'álemì Dene School

Native/Northern Arts & Crafts Program

- Elders and community members will help students learn to make traditional arts and crafts each day after school.
- Local artisans will teach:
  - Sewing, Beading
  - Fish Scale Art, Tufting, Quilling
  - Drumming and Drum making
  - Working with fur
  - Carving, Painting, Pottery
  - Singing, and Song writing

- Students will be able to choose areas of interest
- Access will depend on attendance

- $15,000 from NWT Arts Council;
- $5,000 in-kind each by K'álemì Dene School staff; also supplies

9. **Yellowknife Catholic Schools**
Weledeh, St. Patrick High School and Ecole St. Joseph School

Mentorship to Improve Student Attendance

- Mentorship Coordinator and Community Liaison Worker for at risk students
- Survey may be done to identify systemic barriers like bus passes, alarm clock, or breakfast
- Provide incentives for improved attendance, etc

- $150,000 per year from other funding sources

appendix b

asa social marketing and communications campaign:

- One of the main priorities of the Aboriginal Student Achievement (ASA) Initiative is to develop a Communications Plan to support and raise awareness of the importance of Aboriginal student achievement and success in northern community schools.
- A multi-layered Communications Plan was presented to the ASA Working Group in November 2009.
- The Communications Plan clearly identifies the importance of developing a social marketing campaign to target student absenteeism. The campaign will educate students, parents and the community about the importance of school while also changing public perception around education. The campaign also intends to help people understand that a child does not learn unless he or she is in school.
- To assist in the development and implementation of the social marketing campaign, Outcrop Communications was engaged to work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).
- Outcrop is a Yellowknife-based marketing and advertising company.
- ECE works closely with Outcrop to effectively execute various aspects of the Communications Plan that includes short-term and long-term goals.
- To ensure campaign materials reach their intended target audiences, stakeholders are consistently engaged in the development of materials through a variety of activities. An example of this are the youth focus groups conducted during the initial stages of the project to test the look and feel of campaign materials. The feedback received from participants was consistent and as a result the advertising has simple and clear messaging with accompanying artwork and visuals that demand, and hold your, attention.
- Our ongoing media awareness campaign was launched in February 2010. The campaign started with a series of 4 print ads that have since been expanded to include cable TV, radio and television spots, as well as event banners and multi-lingual posters.
- ECE is committed to using different mediums of communications to get our important message out. Creative approaches and techniques to reach our target audiences continue to be researched and tested. Most recently we had large decals developed to be adhered to floor spaces located in high traffic areas. Presently, our decals are featured in theatres, recreation centres and school front lobbies in communities across the NWT.

- ECE, alongside Outcrop, continue to develop new ads to keep the messaging fresh and top of mind. The strategic placement of media ads align with attendance trends. ECE also works to capitalize on large events that bring various stakeholders together like Skills Canada, Super Soccer in Yellowknife and the Hay River Track and Field Meet. ECE's presence at these events includes the placement of banners, sponsoring Most Sportsmanlike awards, providing healthy snacks and donating t-shirts for participants.
- Education Week in the NWT takes place annually during the last week in February. For the past two years, the theme for Education Week has centered on promoting the importance of regular school attendance. During Education Week 2011, ECE launched the "Thumbs Up" contest co-sponsored by the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association. Window decals were sent to every household in the NWT that included contest rules. To enter this free contest, families emailed ECE three goals they committed to that will help them in their learning journey. Running over the course of 10 weeks, the contest just recently ended and participation was outstanding. ECE received submissions from every region within the NWT and some included goals like "Toss out the Wii" to "Read together every day" and "Eat healthy meals".
- To provide stakeholders with regular updates on the ASA Initiative, ECE distributes regular e-newsletters. The content includes highlights from the ASA Regional Minister's Forums.
- Moving forward, ECE investigating innovative ways to build connections and foster more strong relationships within our education system. ECE is looking at tapping into the success of social media and incorporating technology to develop an online community of support for students, parents, educators and community members.

appendix c

ASA Presentation to Regional Meetings

STRONG MIND
STRONG
NORTH